

CHRISTIAN COURIER

A Reformed Weekly

52nd Year of

REDEEMER COLLEGE LIBRARY

CHRISTIAN COURIER
PER/BX/9401/.C36

FEb 12 1997

February 7, 1997

No. 2519

Many Canadians, Christians support Ottawa accord with Cuba

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO, BURLINGTON, Ont. (with files from the *Globe and Mail*) — Lloyd Axworthy, Canada's Foreign Minister, recently completed a visit to Cuba in which he met with Fidel Castro and reached an agreement on trade, aid and human

rights. Although several American politicians criticized the visit, some Canadian Christian organizations were more positive about it.

Axworthy's talks with Castro and Cuban officials were focused mostly on trade and human rights. One result was a

pact between Cuba and Canada in which Cuba agreed to hold joint seminars on human rights, talks on justice issues and parliamentary exchanges. The Cuban government also agreed to allow the work of Canadian and Cuban non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which

have developed links in the past three years. In addition, the Cuban government committed itself to continue talks aimed at reaching a formal agreement to fight drug trafficking.

American Senator Jesse Helms, co-author of the Helms-Burton law, was sharply critical of Axworthy's meetings with Castro. Helms compared the meetings to a meeting of former British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain with Adolf Hitler just before the Second World War broke out.

But President Bill Clinton was more positive, though cautious in his assessment of the meetings: "My reaction is I'm gratified that the Canadians, along with the Europeans, are now talking more to the Cubans about human rights and democratic reforms. I'm skeptical, frankly, that ... the recent discussions between the Canadians and the Cubans will lead to advances. I believe that our policy is the proper one."

Personal stamp of approval

Hans Vander Stoep, executive director of the Canadian Christian Business Federation, is encouraged by Axworthy's recent trip. The agreement on NGOs "certainly bodes well for NGOs in Canada," he says, and the agreement on drug trafficking is also positive. The Canadian government is "doing an admirable job" in its dealings with Cuba, Vander Stoep asserts.

But he is critical of America's

Helms-Burton law. "It's absolutely insane," he says. "How can the U.S. talk so self-righteously about the Cuban situation?" he asks, when it still does trade with China.

Vander Stoep also criticizes the American embargo on trade with Cuba, which he sees as being ineffective: "I don't think that has had any human rights impact."



Lloyd Axworthy

Vander Stoep supports Canadian companies who want to do business with Cuba. "If you're a small Canadian company and want to do business only in Cuba, that's fine," he says. But if a company plans to trade with Cuba and the U.S., he comments, "they do it at their own peril," because of possible reprisals from the U.S. CCBF See SOME CANADIANS p. 3



Peruvian President Fujimori showed his "neo-liberal" spirit by granting amnesty to human rights abusers in his country. Critics say his "liberal economic reforms" have not been seen by the desperately poor, common people. This cartoon satirizes those reforms, which have only resulted in more belt-tightening and suffering.

See PERU page 2...

LIBRARY REDEEMER COLLEGE
777 HWY #53 EAST
ANCASTER, ON

Dec 97

L9K 1J4

News

Peru gave amnesty to human rights abusers

... continued from page 1

officials charged with human rights abuses until that date would not be prosecuted. The amnesty position of Peru was severely condemned in July 1996 by the United Nations human rights committee.

Fujimori has promised that abuses committed after June 1995 would be severely prosecuted, but there has not been any serious investigation of people accused of abuse since that date. The judiciary and legislature have been under Fujimori's personal control

since his self-coup in 1992.

Peru's military continues to retain "emergency" control over large parts of Peru, covering 36 provinces in which one-third of the people live. Catalina Romero, Peruvian sociologist, told ICCHRLA a year ago in Ottawa that 44 per cent of the population is displaced, living in emergency areas where the military can enter their home and search it at any time. In some areas judges and courts operate out of military barracks, raising doubts about their impartiality and autonomy.

Fujimori has expressed pride over his anti-terrorist legislation which has virtually wiped out the terrorist group Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path). Yet this legislation has been strongly denounced by many international bodies, including the United Nations.

\$60 a month

In Peru about 65 per cent of the people live below the poverty line, with 18 per cent so totally destitute that they cannot meet their basic needs. About 80 per cent of the people are un-

employed or underemployed. The typical wage of employed Peruvians comes out at \$60 a month, but it costs a person \$300 a month to live, Romero told ICCHRLA. Peru's highly touted economic turnaround has not helped them.

In such extreme poverty Peruvians cannot find enough to eat, do not have access to health care and cannot send their children to schools. Peru's infant mortality is third highest in Latin America, after Haiti and Bolivia.

It's no wonder that people

living in such brutal conditions rise up in revolution. Their actions may be wrong and their (communistic) thinking may be wrong, but ICCHRLA understands their desperation. President Fujimori has vowed not to negotiate with these people. But a negotiated solution must be found "that addresses the very real and serious issues of injustice and human rights violations in Peru," says ICCHRLA. The "hidden hostages" cry out to be recognized as victims in a feudal society posing as a democracy.

Innocent prisoners face unspeakable torture

TORONTO — "It was 1 a.m. when the military arrived and started pounding on the door," remembered Maria (not her real name). The young dark-haired woman spoke in a mixture of Quechua and Spanish as she told her story to ICCHRLA's executive director Bill Fairbairn and committee member Father Bob Douglas, when they visited the woman's jail in Chiclayo, Peru, during a September 1995 fact-

finding trip.

"They blindfolded me and my cousin, and took us away in their car, telling us we were needed to make a declaration. The next morning they started asking me about a man named Carlos. 'I don't know anyone called Carlos,' I said. 'You must know him,' they replied. Then they gave me the electricity. It was so strong, I was thrown against the wall. Someone

grabbed me by the neck. Another pushed my head down and I felt a knife against my throat."

The worst of Maria's story is yet to come. "They came back for me at 2 a.m. One of them wanted to know about someone called Pablo. I said that I didn't know this person. Then he asked, 'Are you married, have you ever been with a man?' No, I replied. 'Well, you're going to find out what it's like now.' I pleaded with him not to," she says, breaking into tears as she remembers how she was raped. "I tried to lift my blindfold to see who had done this to me, but I couldn't. The next day they made me declare that nothing had happened. I was terrified that if I didn't, they would come back for me that night and torture me again, so I did what they said. I signed a paper which they told me was a document for my release, but I don't know what it said because I was blindfolded the whole time."

No terrorist

Maria has been detained since February. She still hasn't seen a lawyer and she says she has no

idea why she's being held in this crowded jail, where many suffer from tuberculosis and other diseases in the absence of any health care. "The guard said to me: You're a terrorist," she recounts, still crying. "I don't know what terrorism is. I worked for my aunt in the kitchen of her food stand. The neighbors know what kind of person I am. I'm 22 years old. I haven't done anything."

Maria's story is all too common. She's one of more than 4,000 people who have been arrested and charged with terrorism or treason since harsh legislation was introduced fol-

lowing Alberto Fujimori's self-coup in April 1992, under the pretext of defeating Shining Path insurgents.

"In the last year more people have been sentenced for terrorism than during the previous 10 years," reports Bill Fairbairn. "Many have been given life sentences. Others face sentences of up to 30 years. Peruvian church and human rights organizations I met with are convinced that a very large number of these people are completely innocent."

Reprinted with permission from ICCHRLA's Alerta, No. 5, Sept./Oct. 1995.



Two young Peruvian Indians collect water at a family water supply in a Lima slum

Psalter Hymnals falling apart?

Don't buy replacements, recycle them. We can rebind almost any book for a fraction of the cost of new, and the rebound books will last much longer than the original binding. Why not send us one of your church's hymnals or bibles and we will rebind it at no charge, just to show you how good your old books can look. Send your sample request on church letterhead with the item for binding.

Limit one sample per church. Normal price for quantities of five or more is \$5.65. We rebind and restore all types of books, including personal and family bibles.

wbm Wallaceburg Bookbinding
1-800-214-BIND

95 Arnold Street
Wallaceburg, ON N8A 3P3



- Rents Reduced thanks to lower interest rates.
- Rents now range from \$775 to \$995/month.
- Soma Life Lease units left.
- Monthly maintenance fees reduced also.
- Call George Witvoet at (905) 430-9550 or at 1-800-685-7224.
- Now is the time to act.
- Likely completion date: 1998

Durham Christian Homes Inc., Whitby, Ontario

News

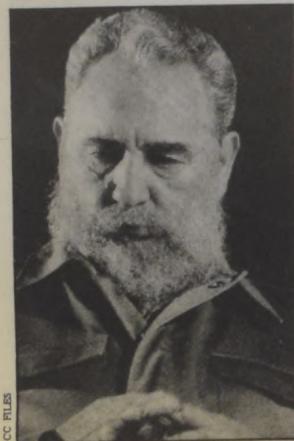
Some Canadians skeptical of Cuban concessions

... continued from page 1

has no official stand on trade with Cuba because it deals mostly with domestic business, he explains.

Boycott of Florida

Chris Ferguson, the area secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean for the United Church's world outreach program, says that Axworthy's approach is "absolutely right." The Canadian-Cuban agreement is "a



Fidel Castro

good step forward. I think the 'piece of paper' is good progress."

It is important for Canada to have "critical engagement" with Cuba and to continue to express concern about human rights, Ferguson asserts. But he criticizes the American government's approach to Cuba, which he calls "bullying and economic punishment.... If you remove that threat, you create progress."

The United Church has condemned the Helms-Burton law and has suggested that Canadians boycott Florida as a vacation destination this winter. All this while a Cuban-American group has put up large billboards in Toronto calling on Canadians to boycott Cuba.

Because of Helms-Burton and the American embargo, there are some supplies that Cuban

church groups can't get, says Ferguson. "This is hurting people." The American government is "listening to a small group of Cuban exiles in the U.S."

Although the new agreement should allow NGOs more freedom to work in Cuba, Ferguson says there are clear limits to what foreign NGOs can do there. But it is possible for Canadian churches to form partnerships with NGOs and churches based in Cuba, and that is what the United Church has been doing. The church is partnered with the Cuban Council of Churches, the Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Cuba and with the Methodist Church of Cuba. Some United churches are also twinned with Cuban churches, he adds.

Accord reinforces practice

The Anglican Church also has partnerships with Cuban churches and does its own development work in Cuba. Eleanor Douglas works in that area. Based in Toronto, she is currently visiting Cuba for two weeks. "The Anglican Church has a long relationship with the Episcopal Church of Cuba," says Douglas. The church also supports agricultural programs run by the Ecumenical Council of Churches of Cuba.

Regarding the Canada-Cuba agreement, Douglas says the agreement on NGOs was "reinforcing what's already going on," she says. A protocol agreement between Canada and Cuba on NGOs was already signed last June, she notes.

Although Ferguson mentioned the difficulty of foreign NGOs working in Cuba, Douglas comments, "We haven't had any trouble getting into the country... It's quite easy to get a visa for us."

On the issues of drugs, Douglas says Cuba is less involved than Colombia and Mexico with producing illegal drugs. The American government's policy of combat-

ting the drug trade has been "quite militaristic [and] quite unsuccessful in terms of reduction," she asserts. But Canadian involvement with drug reduction would be good, she says.

Like the United Church, the Anglican Church opposes the Helms-Burton law. Its synod passed a resolution last year suggesting Canadians avoid Florida this winter. "Helms-Burton is unfair to Canadians and Cubans," says Douglas. Canadian companies should be free to trade with Cuba, she says. Douglas believes the American embargo on trade with Cuba is "morally and ethically wrong. The UN has voted three times to have it lifted."

"I believe there are human rights violations in Cuba," says Douglas. "They shouldn't happen anywhere." But she suggests the best way to help resolve that is to dialogue and continue to trade with Cuba, as Canada has been doing.

Not all Canadians were ecstatic about Axworthy's visit, however. Klaas Brobbel, the

Canadian director of Voice of the Martyrs (VOM), is ambivalent about it. "He raised some pertinent questions on human rights," says Brobbel. But he describes the agreement on human rights as "window-dressing." Castro has made a few concessions which don't amount to much.

VOM works in Cuba, but not through official channels, says Brobbel. That would result in "compromising situations. It is better to work with local organizations."

Commenting on the NGO agreement, Brobbel says, "there's a lot more freedom today than there was 10 years ago." But he adds, "The Cuban church continues to suffer. Thirty churches were destroyed in the last few weeks." Although Castro is offering some freedom, the Cuban government "continues to oppress the church."

Comparing the American and Canadian policies toward Cuba, Brobbel says, "neither strategy has really worked." But the Helms-Burton law is fair, he

says, where it concerns American property confiscated by the Cuban government.

Meaningless crumbs

The *Globe and Mail* carried an editorial in its January 21 issue, which called the visit "Canada's gift to Mr. Castro."

"Abandoned by Moscow, embargoed by Washington, the Western Hemisphere's last dictator can now argue that he has the respect of one of the world's most respectable nations: Canada," wrote the editor, calling the agreement "a few meaningless crumbs."

"Nothing was said about the hundreds of political prisoners that languish in Cuban jails, nothing about a freer press or more independent judiciary, nothing about the thousands of Cubans denied the right of free emigration, and nothing, of course, about elections," continued the editor.

Several *Globe and Mail* readers agreed with this assessment in later letters to the editor.

SPECIAL OFFER EARLY BOOKING BONUS

TORONTO — AMSTERDAM



Book Now, Pay in Full
And
Save Money!

NON-STOP PER WIDE BODY B-767

Departure dates (Mon. & Thur.)	Return Fare	Senior Fare*	Child Fare*
May 01, 08, 12, 15, 19	549	529	479
May 22, 26, 29	559	539	479
June 02, 05, 09, 12	599	559	479
June 16, 19, 23, 26, 30	659	609	519
July 03, 07, 10, 14	709	659	559
July 17, 21, 24, 28, 31	749	699	559
August 04, 07, 11, 14	749	699	559
August 18, 21, 25, 28	709	659	559
September 01, 04, 08, 11	659	609	519
September 15, 18, 22, 25, 29	599	559	479
October 02, 06, 09, 13, 16, 23, 30	559	539	479

(October 30 westbound only) AIRPORT TAX \$77 LUGGAGE ALLOWANCE 2 PIECES

STAR CLASS is available at a surcharge of \$380 return.
Star Class offers comfortable seating in a separate cabin, gourmet meals served on Doulton China, priority check-in and much more.

*Seniors: 60 years & over; Children: 2 - 15 years. Insurance is extra.
This special offer applies only with full payment due at time of booking.

Payment by cheque or cash only. This offer can be withdrawn at any time, without notice. So Book Now!

VERSTRAETE TRAVEL & CRUISES

14845 Yonge Street, Ste. 300, Aurora, ON L4G 6H8: Phone (416) 969-8100

Toll Free: 1-800-565-9267

36 Secord Dr., St. Catharines, ON L2N 1K8: Phone (905) 934-4414; Henny Vuyk (905) 934-0666

Ottawa, Nepean Kanata

Sisco Reitsma

Registered Relocation Specialist



(613) 596-5353 or (613) 596-1238

RE/MAX Metro City Realty
2255 Carling Ave.
Ottawa, ON K2B 7Z5

The world is too much in our living room

There is a whole galaxy of cultures that make up our society. We're not talking ethnic cultures here, but ideological cultures — groupings of interests and devotion. They are more than fan clubs. They are mind-shaping action groups that fight for their own turf and enslave thousands of people.

We're thinking of unionism, sportism, consumerism, capitalism, feminism, nationalism, public-school egalitarianism, political powerism, media and entertainment sensationalism, and such cultures as the pro-choice movement and the drug, alcohol and sex cultures.

Each one of these movements or groups cultivates its own sphere of influence and does its part to shape life as we know it in Canada. It's

hard to avoid being influenced by any of these. Many of us are tarred with their brushes and sometimes lose sight of what it means to be loyal citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

All of these cultures have their prophets, their magazines, their centres, their lobby groups, their bibles, their enemies, their masks, their spin doctors and their research sources.

Several of them justify themselves by offering correctives to wrong developments (think of unions, feminism and nationalism). But all of them tear the fabric of creation out of shape. All of them challenge the revelation of God through Jesus Christ. All of them promote the idea of human autonomy.

All of them are idols of our time.

adversarial unions, from capitalistic tycoons and from secular feminists that tell you it's better to be happy and free. But their brand of happiness and freedom is only for this world; or better, is not meant to be for this world but finds a temporary shelter in this world that seems to prove them right. There really is no future in their worship, and it shows already in this life.

The carpenter in Isaiah 44:13-17 makes the same mistake as today's idol worshipers. He grows a tree and from half of its wood he builds a fire to warm himself and cook his meal, from the rest he carves an image "in the form of a man, of man in all his glory.... He bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, 'Save me; you are my god.'"

What does a capitalist tycoon do? He takes his talent and with it he builds a business, provides work for hundreds of people. He makes a living and keeps warm. That's the one half of the tree in Isaiah's story. With the rest of his talent he creates a monopoly, ruthlessly smashing all competition, builds up a bank account and ends up worshiping the empire he has built.

The unionist starts out setting things right over against his exploitative employer, but then he turns his power into an oppressive tool of solidarity forever and damn the scabs. He worships the sanctity of the picket line.

It's funny how we can use one part of the creation and have dominion over it, and then we end up bowing before the other part saying, "Save me; you are my god."

A question of ownership

God tells Israel to remember the story of the carpenter, and he adds, "I have made you, you are my servant." Being God's servants means we have to stay clear of all those cultures that seek to enlarge the rule of humanity at the expense of the rule of God.

Jesus picks up this theme when he says to his disciples, "If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world," (John 15:19). It's a question of to whom we belong and whom we worship. BW

Christian Courier

Formerly known as Calvinist Contact
Founded in 1945

An independent weekly that seeks the truth, care and rule of Jesus Christ as it:

- reports on significant happenings in the Christian community and the world;
- expresses opinions that are infused by Scripture and Spirit and rooted in a Reformed perspective;
- provides opportunities for contact and discussion for the Christian community.

Editor: Bert Witvoet **General Manager:** Stan de Jong

Associate Editor: Marian Van Til

Staff Reporter: Alan Doerksen

Regional Reporters:

Jeff Hoogendoorn, Victoria, B.C.;

James Kwantes, Vancouver, B.C.; Cindy Bruin, Calgary, Alta.; Gordon Legge, Calgary, Alta.; Jane Ouwehand, Agassiz, B.C.; Jessie Schut, Edmonton, Alta.; Valerie Walker, Dartmouth, N.S.;

Robert VanderVennen, Toronto, Ont.

Circulation Manager: Grace Bowman;

Advertising and Typesetting: Ingrid Torn;

Layout & Design: Alan Doerksen, Ingrid Torn

Proofreading: Grace Bowman

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Robert Bernhardt, Harry der Nederlanden

Margaret Griffioen-Drenth, Anne Van Aragon Hutton,

Doug Roorda, Wendy Saunders,

Erick Schuringa, William Van Huizen,

Nelly Westerhoff, Valerie Walker.

The publication of comments, opinions or advertising does not imply agreement or endorsement by either *Christian Courier* or the publisher:

Calvinist Contact Publishing Limited
4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON

L2W 1A1, Canada

Tel: (905) 682-8311; fax: (905) 682-8313;
e-mail: cceditor@aol.com

It's not easy to be holy

In Old Testament times God demanded of his people that they cast out all idols, get rid of all the phoney gods. God wanted his people to be holy. It seems that doing that today is harder. And it may be that this is so because of television and other information media including the Internet. Turn on these media channels and another world enters your living room. And it's not a world that helps you in your promise: "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." Too often you encounter a constant barrage of idolatry. The ads, the sitcoms, the sports coverage even the news loudly proclaim the gospel of human-centred fun and safety.

This has its effect on those who uncritically expose themselves to the daily flood of materialistic messages and images. Tony Campolo once remarked that North American parents focus a lot on the happiness of their children. Above all else, they want their children to be happy, he said, whereas Japanese parents want their children to be successful. "My mother never talked about her children having to be happy or successful," said Campolo. "She wanted her children to be good."

I imagine that most mothers from the past wanted their children to be good. But the culture has shifted on us. Materialism and consumerism have taken their toll. Do we as Christian parents also focus too much on happiness as a goal for our children — for ourselves?

No future in idolatry

Wanting your children to be good, on the other hand, is answering to God's call to be good. Yes, God wants us to be good, not in a moralistic sense of the word, but in a wholesome, God-fearing sense. And he wants us to be "good to" as well — good to our parents, good to our children, good to the soil, good to animals and good to the poor.

But it's difficult to be good or good-to when you constantly hear messages coming from

Post Script: When I talk about feminism, I mean secular feminism. I realize that many of us call ourselves Christian feminists. Although I feel one with the Christian feminists in their struggle for equality, I will not call myself a feminist for the simple reason that I stick to the old definition that an *ism* is an exaggeration of something. But that leaves me with an inconsistency since I do sometimes refer to myself as a Calvinist. Too bad the word "Calvinian" is not in greater usage. BW

Opinion

It's insane to say there are absolutely no absolutes

Ron Gray

A respected journalist says, "moral absolutes are a terrible idea." Has she thought about what the world would be like without them? And is her statement itself not an absolute?

"There can be no absolutes."

"Are you certain of that?"

"Oh, absolutely!"

A Trinity Western University student, Harold Visser, recently appeared as a guest on a radio talk show, as one of the participants in a cross-Canada tour called Challenge '94. The tour participants talked to high school students about the advantages of chastity, or what they called "saved sex."

Late in the program, the host commented, "Moral absolutes are a terrible idea." Happily, the tour participants did

not rise to the bait — happily, because they were not there to debate such arcane topics but to give young people the positive message that they can control their sexual impulses. And they stuck to that task.

But I couldn't help wondering if the host had thought about the implications of her statement, and whether she realized that, since the statement itself is an absolute, it is self-contradictory and meaningless.

No restrictions for ME

When *The Closing of the American Mind* by the late Allan Bloom, professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago, came out in 1988, it rocked the academic world. In it, he documented how moral relativism has eviscerated the

intellectual life of North American higher education. Antinomianism, the denial of moral absolutes, has provided the definitive slogan of our times: "No one's gonna tell ME what to do!"

But even the most ardent antinomian will, when pressed, acknowledge some moral absolutes: the wrongness of child abuse, spousal abuse, lying for the purpose of destroying another's reputation, paedophilia, betrayal of one's pledge.... One could actually develop quite a list. But there's the rub: we don't mind creating such a list for others, but we don't want anyone making a list of "no-nos" for us!

That really is what's at the heart of atheism: not, as most people think, that self-declared atheists don't believe in a deity and that they cannot believe in absolutes; but rather, that because they don't want to accept absolutes, they must reject belief in any deity other than themselves. Because if there is a Creator, an intelligent, personal Creator who declares some things to be right and others wrong, then there are moral absolutes, whether we want them or not.

A sense of fairness

As C.S. Lewis wrote in *Mere Christianity*, we all intuitively recognize some moral absolutes, such as fairness and justice. Children on the playground pepper their arguments with statements like, "That's not fair!" and "How would you like it if someone did the same thing to you?" There is a sense of "ought-ness" which all people recognize. The ancient Greek and medieval philosophers called

it "natural law" or "natural justice."

Not only do we recognize this "ought-ness"; we also recognize that none of us obeys it perfectly.

Where does that sense of "ought-ness" come from? It cannot be a product of evolution, for self-sacrifice explicitly repudiates the imperative of ensuring the survival of our own DNA. If we see a man sinking in quicksand, for example, we know we ought to pull him out. We may or may not act upon that noble impulse; we may run away from the "ought-ness," but if we do, we will feel guilty of cowardice.

Yet leaving the man in the quicksand, and saving ourselves, is exactly what the survival instinct and evolution would postulate: save your own DNA. So where do we get the sense of obligation to risk our own life to save another?

It comes, Lewis suggests, from our residual awareness that if such standards exist, they must come from some absolute standard of right and wrong, and we will some day be judged by the One who sets the standard. No pragmatist has yet been able to come up with a better explanation.

The question of moral absolutes doesn't revolve around whether or not we like them. They exist, and we must incorporate that reality into our frame of reference. Because to deny reality is to take the path to insanity, for the individual as well as for society.

Ron Gray is the leader of the Christian Heritage Party of Canada. He lives in Abbotsford, B.C.

A vow is a vow

Charles Swindoll

ZPS — Marriage isn't begun in a context of vagueness and uncertainty. Two people, fully conscious and very much awake and aware, declare their vows. I realize vows may vary, but without exception, they include words like: "... for better or for worse," and "... 'til death do us part."

Right? Remember those words you promised before God? Did he hear you? I'm being facetious — *of course he heard you!* Does he take such vows seriously?

Read for yourself: "When you make a vow to God, do not be late to pay it, for he takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow!" (Eccles. 5:4).

Yes, he not only takes them seriously, he remembers them permanently. A vow is a vow. A solemn promise by which one individual binds himself or herself to an act or service or another person.

What is it God commands? "Pay what you vow!"

Now, listen very carefully. Read this slowly. No amount of psychological therapy, positive thinking (often dubbed "grace"), semantic footwork with the biblical text, alternative concepts, or mutual support from family and friends can remove your responsibility to *keep your vow*.

Unless you are a victim of the conditions I talk about in my booklet "Divorce: Biblical Bases for Divorce and Remarriage," you are responsible for your marriage. I repeat: a vow is a vow.

It ain't easy!

Of course it's difficult! For sure, there will be times you are inwardly convinced you can't go on. But remember your vow, your stated commitment: "for better, for worse...."

What you are experiencing may be some of the "worse." And no marriage is exempt from such times.

I remember driving over to some friends' house quite a few years ago to pick up their daughter so she could go ice-skating with one of my children. The mom and dad were hanging wallpaper together.

Now if you've ever done that as a husband-wife team, you know how tough that project is on a marriage. [The husband] and I laughed together as I shared with him the three stages couples go through when they hang wallpaper together:

First week: the couple considers separation.

Second week: the couple separates.

Third week: divorce proceedings begin!

After the joke, he leaned over to me in the car and said something I wish I could hear every Christian husband and wife declare. With great sincerity he said, "Do you know what makes our marriage work? One word: commitment. I am committed to that woman and she is to me — forever."

This excerpt is taken from the booklet "Commitment: The Key to Marriage." (Provided and published by Zondervan Publishing House, 1995.)

Christian Courier

An independent weekly with a Reformed perspective.

Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association.

Canada mail: Publications Mail Registration No. 0451. Postage paid at St. Catharines, Ont. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1.

U.S. mail: Christian Courier (USPS 518-090). Second-class postage paid at Lewiston, NY. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, Box 110, Lewiston, NY 14092.

Subscriptions:

	Canada	U.S.A.
(effective Feb. 1, 1995)	(GST incl.)	(GST free)
one year (44 issues)	\$43.50	\$35.00 U.S.
two years (88 issues)	\$82.00	\$66.00 U.S.
three years (132 issues)	\$123.00	\$99.00 U.S.
overseas one year	\$135 airmail	
	\$85.00 surface mail	

Advertising deadlines: display advertising: Wednesday, 8:30 a.m.; classified advertising: Thursday, 8:30 a.m. All deadlines are for the following week's issue. See classified pages for more details.

(ISSN 1192-3415) Published weekly on Fridays except for Feb. 28, April 4, May 30, July 11, Aug. 15, Oct. 3, Nov. 28, Dec. 26 by Calvinist Contact Publishing Limited.

All correspondence should be addressed to: 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1, Tel.: 905-682-8311 or fax: 905-682-8313

PRINTED IN CANADA

This tabloid contains recycled paper.



Sports

What's the score?



Rob Janssens

Player battled off the field for labor equality

It's hard to believe that a minor baseball trade made between the St. Louis Cardinals and the Philadelphia Phillies in the fall of 1969 would still have major implications for the way the sport of baseball is run today. The principals in the deal, Tim McCarver and Dick Allen, were decent, solid players, but the trade hardly sent shock waves through baseball at the time.

Baseball history would have treated this transaction like it has the thousands of others which have taken place before and since, except for one thing. One of the traded players, Curt Flood, was set to confront over 100 years of baseball and legal precedent. He would publicly announce that he would not welcome being treated like a piece of property, willingly uproot his life and move to Philadelphia. His business investments, family, friends and community roots were stuck firmly in St. Louis. Furthermore, as a successful black man plying his trade in front of thousands of fans, he wasn't sure if he'd be welcomed in the "City of Brotherly Love."

As had been the case for nearly a century, players in major league baseball had only one option if they were dissatisfied with management treatment: retire. A horrid contractual staple was the reserve clause, which bound a player to the team that signed him *for life*. Each year the players would shuffle into the owner's office and sign a contract which would expire in a year's time, after which the ritual would repeat itself. There was no opportunity for salary arbitration, not to mention free agency. Players were absolutely unable to shop around for the team they wanted to play for, and other teams were barred from entering a bidding war for players whose contracts had "expired."

Baseball exempt

These Dickensian employee-management relations were all perfectly legal. In 1922, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that the sport of baseball was not subject to the antitrust legislation which governed other American industry. In other words, even though baseball was certainly an industry which dealt in interstate commerce, it did not have to act like one under the law. In 1953, the Court reaffirmed this decision, despite the fact that other sports, like football, horse racing, and boxing, were expected to follow the guidelines of antitrust law. And while Congress can at any time bring baseball under this law, it has yet to do so, despite the fiasco of the 1994-95 strike.

Although the players (employees) were treated like property due to the Court's decision and Congress's appalling lack of a backbone, they, before the birth of a union, had been brainwashed for so long by the owners and the media that they were convinced that the end of the reserve clause (which bound a player to a team for life and rendered him to property status) would bankrupt the sport. Never mind the fact that the matter went against the basic premise of the U.S. Constitution.

Nevertheless, Curt Flood, with the support of the fledgling Players Association, decided to risk his career and possibly his dignity by taking the commissioner of baseball (Bowie Kuhn) to the Supreme Court in the early '70s to find out if the Court would bow to tradition or logic. But on June 6, 1972, the players lost again. The Court did admit that the industry of baseball did fit the definition of "interstate commerce," (and therefore should not be exempt from antitrust law), yet decided to back the precedent of 1922 and 1953.

It wasn't just the Court and tradition which did Flood in. The owners were absolutely unwilling to allow the shadow of competition for players to darken their doors, even though it would have meant an instant boom in the industry due to the free market system. Commissioner Kuhn (a puppet for the owners), writing in his autobiography after his term was up, still felt that the end of the reserve clause would demolish the game's integrity and honesty!

Even the fans, who adored the players as heroes from the early days of the sport, devalued the worth of the athletes by supporting this system of neo-slavery.

Too much for the good ol' boys

Ironically, it was about this time that the Supreme Court heard and ruled on the *Roe v. Wade* case, giving women the right for abortion, or, as proponents said, to make decisions about her own body. The rights of a black man asking for a little professional dignity, though, were obviously too much for the "good ol' boys" on the bench.

A lot has changed since 1972, much of it because of the Flood case, which at least drew attention to the mistreatment of baseball players. After a 1972 players strike and the success of 1975, when the owners finally relinquished the mighty reserve clause, creating the dawn of free agency, the players have come a long way — to the point where the first \$3,000,000 a year contract was signed in 1989 and the first \$10,000,000 a year player would sign in 1996.

Why am I writing this now? Because the gutsy Curt Flood, who became known for what he did off the field rather than on it, died last month. But he left a legacy which has seen the sport of baseball blossom with rich rewards for the owners, fans, and yes, the players. Standing up for what you believe in certainly isn't easy, but Flood lived to see the fruit of his efforts, even though they helped the current generation of players far more than himself.

Rob Janssens teaches Grade 5/6 at Trinity Christian School, Burlington, Ont.

The dilemma of a Christian athlete

John H. Bratt

Christian athletes, like all other athletes, are determined to excel. God has given them certain abilities in sports and they are duty-bound to develop them to the utmost. Such abilities are talents that God has entrusted. Those talents are not to be left unused, neglected or underdeveloped. There is an obligation that rests upon athletes as custodians of God's gifts.

Christian athletes are faced with some hard choices that demand earnest reflection and ardent prayer. Their particular athletic gifts offer them challenges as well as opportunities.

For example, an excellent hockey player, one who can outmanoeuvre other players on the ice and has uncanny ability to slip or power the puck past the goalie into the net, is offered a lucrative contract by a team in the NHL. It demands Sunday play. He has been raised in a religious tradition that honors

not under-estimate the temptation.

"Coaches tell me that I can play Division I or II basketball. What should I do? Should I select a secular college or university that makes such a tempting offer? Or should I select a Christian college which offers a distinctively Christian worldview? Should I take the immediate benefits or be concerned about long term implications? What philosophy of life am I interested in in the long haul? Do I want a Christian environment where I would get not only a Christ-centred education but also the possibility of meeting a life-mate?"

Another angle

Is there another angle to the problem? Should a Christian athlete enter the area of pro sports in order to be a Christian influence and to give a witness in word and deed to the grace of God in Jesus Christ? If all areas



"Should a Christian athlete enter the area of pro sports in order to be a Christian influence and to give a witness in word and deed to the grace of God in Jesus Christ?"

the Lord's Day. The offer is tempting. What should be do? Baseball players face similar dilemmas.

Tempting options

In professional tennis, football, golf and other sports similar choices need to be made by the Christian.

Christian senior high school basketball players face their own dilemma. Colleges will seek to recruit. They may have a disruptive school year as a consequence. Coaches may pestle them no end. Players may be promised tempting athletic scholarships, perhaps a "free ride," a college education worth thousands of dollars. We must

of life ought to be claimed for the Lordship of Jesus Christ should not this sphere also be included? Of course, this assumes a living, vital faith on the part of the athlete.

This is certainly a matter for the sensitive Christian conscience, a decision that is fraught with far-reaching implications. Christian coaches are in a strategic position to influence their players, and parents can help to steer perplexed athletes in the direction in which they ought to go.

Dr. John H. Bratt is emeritus professor of religion at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich.

ARTS & MEDIA



Maria Mitchell: The Soul of an Astronomer

Marian Van Til

Maria Mitchell: The Soul of an Astronomer

By Beatrice Gormley



Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995. ISBN 0-8028-5099-5 (hardcover); blk. & wht. photos. \$15 (US). Paperback: \$8 (US).

This well-written and researched biography about America's first professional woman astronomer is part of Eerdmans' "Women of Spirit" series aimed at children aged 10 to 14. Girls that age will find Maria Mitchell (pronounced Ma-RYE-ah) and

her story unusual and intriguing, if not inspiring.

Born in 1818, Maria grew up in the Quaker community on Nantucket Island off the coast of Massachusetts. Though the Quakers had come to Massachusetts due to persecution by the Puritans, and the two groups differed in faith, they shared certain characteristics: industriousness in both personal and public life; love of learning and appreciation for the value of scholarship; a sober, unadorned lifestyle and dislike of pretension.

Maria seemed to absorb those qualities in double quantities. She shunned fashion all her life, but ungracious and stern she wasn't. Though a rigorous, no-nonsense scientist, Maria was appreciated for her warmth and effectiveness as a teacher and for her straightforward but kind manner. With her, "what you saw was what you got"; she hated duplicity.

Prejudice to overcome

Maria became a much-loved professor of astronomy at Vassar College (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.). Vassar, founded in 1865, was the first American university for just women, and only the second one that admitted women at all. Though that was the case, Maria was under-paid and encountered much prejudice on the part of people who thought that wo-

A lady and a scholar

men were simply mentally inferior to men, or that, at best, intellectual pursuits would make young women "unlady-like."

As a child Maria showed peculiar mathematical talents, a necessity for an astronomer. At age 12, Maria was helping her father, William Mitchell, an amateur astronomer, make the calculations necessary to set the chronometers on the ships that sailed into Nantucket Harbor, a whaling centre at the time. (Precisely calibrated chronometers were necessary in order for ships at sea to know exactly where they were.)

Maria's father became her mentor and dearest friend. Her more organized and efficient mother ran the household of 10 children, but not without help from Maria, who was one of the older daughters.

Search for truth

Maria was characterized by a constant search for the truth, both in exploring the sky with telescopes and in examining religious questions (she saw no chasm between God's Word in the Bible and in nature). In her early 20s she dropped out of the Society of Friends (the official name of the Quakers); her questions weren't answered, and there seemed to be a gulf between the beliefs and the lives of some of Nantucket's prominent Quakers.

Author Beatrice Gormley, who has written many well-received children's books, has an interest in science herself, and it shows. She presents scientific ideas and terms in a way that is easy to understand. Yet she never underestimates the intelligence of her readers. Anything else would be inappropriate in writing the story of a woman who dedicated many years of her life to getting young women to take their minds

seriously.

Young Christian readers will be interested in Maria's faith struggle and may have questions, perhaps difficult ones, about that struggle. Maria was a thoughtful woman who recoiled at social injustice but she never joined a church after leaving the Quakers. She gravitated toward Unitarianism. Two elements of traditional Christianity especially

mentions her even reading the Bible, much less how she reacted to it or the place it may have played in her questions and eventual beliefs.

Maria Mitchell's life, attitudes and work can spark lively conversation. Thus, this is an excellent book to be read by a teacher to a class (if reading good books aloud to a class isn't still being done, it should be), or to be read



Maria with her class in front of the observatory, ca. 1878. "We especially need imagination in science," she told her students. "It is not all mathematics, nor all logic, but it is somewhat beauty and poetry."

ly bothered her: the belief in life after death (which she longed to be true), and original sin (which she thought outrageous).

Inspiring example

Mitchell's astronomical work easily convinced her that there was a God who created and in some manner sustained the universe. Yet she didn't easily accept on faith things she couldn't prove. The author is not as good at presenting the faith questions as she is in describing Mitchell's personal and scientific journey.

Maria, as a voracious reader and former Quaker, must have scoured the Bible in her search for truth, yet Gormley never

at home by both a parent and older child, and then talked about.

Mothers and daughters may find doing that an especially rewarding experience. Maria Mitchell stands as an inspiring example of fortitude and resolve to any girl or woman who must overcome gender bias and obstacles in order to fully use the talents God has given her.

'Nunbun' a marketer's miracle

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (EP) — A coffee shop cinnamon bun that bears resemblance to Mother Teresa has fueled the creation of a small industry. The Bongo Java coffee shop has the bun on display in a glass case, and has created a "nunbun" Website on the Internet (<http://www.qecmedia.com/nunbun/>). The page lets users link to a picture of the bun that "morphs" into Mother Teresa, as well as to news stories and jokes

about the pastry.

Available for sale are T-shirts, bookmarks and prayer cards, coffee mugs, Mother Teresa Special Blend Coffee, and a video in which a squirrel steals the bun and eats it while horrified Bongo Java workers look on.

The store says it will send at least five per cent of the proceeds to Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity.

Heading for church? Turn on your computer

LOS ANGELES (EP) — "The Church On The Web," a new cyberspace gathering place for Christians from around the world, has been launched in — you guessed it — Los Angeles. Its WorldWide Web address is www.churchontheweb.com.

The new Internet "church," however, isn't headed by a Lotuslander. Pastor Michael Bassett is British-born. Bassett says he hopes the church has a ministry to shut-ins, and also to people who have stopped attending church but retain an interest in religion.

- CONTENT digital organs
- Pre-owned pianos
- Sheet music
- CDs & Tapes

THE MUSIC GROUP

Willem Van Suydam
General Manager
5205 Harvester Rd., Unit 2
Burlington, ON L7L 6B5

1-800-376-7199

Church

Indonesian riot spreads to churches

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — A riot over police detention of three teachers eventually spread to attacks on churches and businesses in Tasikmalaya, Indonesia, Dec. 26, 1996. Four persons were reported dead because of the unrest. This is the third major incident in which churches were attacked this year.

The immediate cause of the riot was the arrest of three teachers from a local Muslim school. The son of a police officer had been disciplined by the school, so the officer arrested and mistreated three of the

teachers. When word got out, residents and students gathered at the police station and demanded that the officers who abused the teachers be handed over. The station was attacked with stones.

Following a break for noon prayers, unidentified persons urged the crowd to attack churches and properties belonging to people of Chinese descent. The crowd split into two directions. In the southern and northern suburbs several factories were set on fire.

Eleven churches were attacked, along with department

stores, cars and smaller shops. Of the churches, four were completely destroyed, including a Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) member church, the Christian Church of Indonesia (GKI). The riots were quieted when troops arrived in late afternoon and sealed off the city.

Religion masks intentions

The victims were a woman found burned in the GKI church, another woman of Chinese descent found in the rubble of her leather shop, a rioter who fell from a truck and a man who was burned but unidentified.

The Communion of Churches in Indonesia issued a statement of disappointment and concern, calling on all parties to exercise restraint. In the name of the churches, they appealed to "everyone, including security forces, to prevent and stop all forms of violence and abuse of power."

Muslim leaders also urged non-violence and suggested the acts were the result of social unrest. Perpetrators had only used religion to mask their intention

of stirring up trouble, according to Hasan Basri, chair of the Indonesian Ulema Council.

This incident may be even larger than the riots in Situbondo on Oct. 10, although the number of churches attacked directly is smaller. Coupled with the attacks of June 9 in Surabaya, the Tasikmalaya incident was the third major incident in 1996 involving attacks on churches. Between these incidents there have been several smaller attacks.

Indonesian Christian schools face changes

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — The Christian schools in Indonesia must persuade the government and other Indonesians of a new role for these schools. This was the judgment of a Dutch observer at an October conference in Indonesia to address the Christian schools' future.

About three per cent of the schools in Indonesia are Christian, which amounts to about 4,000 schools. The Christians have about 10 per cent of the population, and thus are a minority in churches and schools. The schools were set up to benefit society as a whole, and many were built in poor areas of the country. In the past many Muslims attended these schools.

Government schools, however, have nearly the same purpose, and slowly Muslims have

been leaving the Christian schools. Public schools are mostly free, while in Christian schools parents pay part of the costs.

As Indonesia has grown in prosperity, the need for good education has increased, according to Ron Rijnbende, the director of the Union for Christian Education in the Netherlands. The government has been investing in government schools at a higher rate, and the gap between the facilities and services of government and Christian schools has been widening. As a result, the number of students is dropping further.

Scapegoat or valid contributor?

The schools must now consider whether they can create their own unique purpose. Their original purpose has been

gradually taken over by the government. And it is questionable whether there is room for a change. The schools are required to teach within the ideology of Pancasila, which teaches harmony between the five recognized religions. If the purposes are reformulated, the schools will need to convince the society that they still make a valid contribution to Indonesia. There is a chance they could become a scapegoat for dissatisfaction in their communities, Rijnbende observed.

Moreover, the schools might lose even the government support they now have. Then the alternative would be private support or the commercialization of the schools. Only wealthier parents could send children there.

Means to serve the poor

The churches that support the schools, however, still see the schools as a way to serve the poor in their communities. Privatization would probably come in tension with the goals of the churches.

Rijnbende concluded that the future of the schools will probably depend on the government. While foreign support is welcome and useful for specific projects, it cannot be the main support of the schools. So the churches need a well-organized lobby to convince the government of the value of the Christian schools, Rijnbende said. And here international co-operation on Christian schooling may be helpful.

U.S. congressional commission hears testimony on religion in Russia

WASHINGTON, D.C. (CWN)

— The Moscow correspondent for Oxford, England-based Keston News Service told a US commission last week that religious freedoms in Russia are elusive and on the decline.

"In religious freedom as in many other areas of life, Russia is to a large extent a lawless state," Lawrence Uzzell told the US Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Freedom of worship, which experienced a brief renaissance after the fall of the Soviet Union five years ago, has been in decline, mostly for non-Russian Orthodox minorities.

Pressure needed

Uzzell wants Western nations put pressure on Russia's leaders to guarantee fundamental human rights, including freedom of worship, before their nation can be integrated into Europe and the West. Russia's 1993 constitution guaranteed religious freedom and declared all religions equal before the law "but this guarantee has turned out to be largely meaningless in practice," Uzzell said.

The commission, set up by Congress to monitor compliance with the 1975 Helsinki Accords on Security and Cooperation in Europe, includes members of Congress, administration officials and their staffs. Uzzell said that a large portion of provincial governments have been violating those accords and the Russian constitution by imposing harsh regulations on religions.

He predicted that the provincial laws would be used to suppress those religions that are politically inconvenient to authorities or their political allies.

These laws often provide for revoking a church's accreditation if it ignites "so-called religious dissension," Uzzell said. "This could easily include a sermon disagreeing with Russian Orthodox teachings about icons, or a lecture setting forth the Western position on the schism between the Papacy and the Orthodox Church."

Baptists or Roman Catholics thus have no guarantee that they are free to preach the core doctrinal beliefs of their own religions."

Partial birth abortionists face infanticide charges

COLUMBIA, S.C. (EP) — Abortionists who perform "partial-birth" abortions on viable fetuses in South Carolina will be charged with homicide, according to the State Attorney General Charlie Condon. "I am placing the physicians of South Carolina on notice," said Condon. "This office will not stand

idly by and tolerate this form of infanticide." In July South Carolina's Supreme Court ruled that a viable fetus is a person. The ruling came in a decision involving child abuse charges against a woman whose child was born with cocaine in its blood.

Britain losing its Christian identity

LONDON, England (EP) — Britain may soon lose its identity as a Christian nation, according to a report prepared for the Church of England and the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland.

The Mission Theological Advisory Group found that while many Britons profess a belief in God, there is an increasing "drift" away from church membership, accompanied by a growing interest in such New Age phenomenon as horoscopes and soothsayers.

"A very large number of people still claim to believe in God, to pray, to believe reasonably traditional things about the person of Christ," said Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali of the Church of England's diocese of Rochester. "But that does not work out into belonging to a Christian church."

Church

Chapter & Verse



Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
Al Wolters

What does God want me to do now?

"Then the Lord turned to Gideon and said, 'Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel from the land of Midian; I hereby command you.' He responded, 'But sir, how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.' (Judges 6:14-15).

I used to live with one of my sisters.

Once in a while, say on my birthday or on a vacation day after a particularly hectic season at my job, she would offer to spend the day with me doing whatever would make me happy. My answer was often: "We can do anything you like, as long as I don't have to decide anything." Decision-making is wearing, and all I wanted on my day off was to be free of that burden. Of course, there were limits to my passivity, which we both knew. If she suggested an activity which I don't like and am not good at — bowling, say — I would quickly exercise my right of veto. I wanted her to do the work of making the decisions, but I also wanted final control.

In *Miss Manners' Guide for the Turn-of-the Millennium*, etiquette expert Judith Martin suggests that people often take the same attitude toward their weddings. They want to reduce the stress of decision-making by being given an ironclad set of rules to deal with all the most difficult moments. At the same time, they want to be free to "be themselves" whenever the fancy strikes.

Miss Manners refuses both demands. She insists that the basic rules of courtesy be honored, so that it is never appropriate to omit saying thank-you for a gift, even if you are sincerely an ingrate. She also insists that, within the framework of such basic courtesy, people must accept responsibility for working out the details of their lives.

The opposite of what we hope

The reality of etiquette, Miss Manners suggests, is just the opposite of what we hope. Instead of having someone else make all the hard decisions and reserving the right of veto to ourselves, the reality is that we need to freely make all the hard decisions, while allowing that the rules of courtesy will sometimes veto what we want to do.

People often talk to me about the difficulty of "knowing God's will." How can I know what God wants me to do as I face decisions in my life? Here, too, most of us want someone else to make the hard decisions for us, though we also want to decline if the decision is not to our liking. We want God to give us clear, unambiguous answers to our questions. But if the answer is costly or unpleasant, we want to be able to say: "I can't possibly do that. I'm not heroic material. You'd better find someone else."

The truth is we have things backwards. God has given us a basic moral framework — not all that different from the rules of courtesy — within which we need to make decisions responsibly and freely. As Augustine once said, "Love God, and do as you please." Accept the framework, and accept the gift of free responsibility within it.

Many of the decisions we face in life are simple matters of obedience to the clear moral framework of loving God. In the story of Gideon, for instance, it shouldn't have taken a visit from an angel for Gideon to figure out that the idols in his father's house had to be torn down. Idolatry is not within the realm of free expression. The only problem Gideon faced in deciding whether or not to destroy the idols was the problem of his own cowardice. There was no real question about what God wanted, or what was the right thing to do.

A prodigality of goodness

On the other hand, many of the decisions we face are without one clear, right answer. We are given free choice between many good things. This is a sign of how bountiful our God is. I am free to choose which suit to wear on a given morning, since I can love God while wearing either. I am free to choose at which school to study, since I can love God in either place. I am free to choose between two good jobs, since I can love God by taking either one. God extravagantly provides me with more good things than I can possibly experience in this lifetime. I am allowed to delight in his prodigality as I choose between them.

It is only once in awhile that God calls us to a specific task, prepared only for us. In my life, I think this happened twice. As I listen to people tell stories of such moments of calling, there is rarely any real doubt about what God is saying, though there is often doubt about our willingness to respond in obedience.

Exceptional guidance comes with exceptional clarity. Gideon's need to put out the fleece to confirm his particular call is not a sign that God hasn't spoken clearly. Gideon has already been visited by an angel who has spelled everything out for him. Gideon just doesn't like what he has heard and is hoping for a change of plan. He doesn't need to know the will of God. He knows that well enough. He needs to decide to follow that will.

God is very patient with Gideon's delay tactics, but doesn't give in to them. He keeps repeating what he expects, until finally Gideon's will collapses into his own.

Like many difficult things, decision-making gets easier with practice. The habit of loving and obeying God makes many decisions clear. The habit of accepting responsibility as a gift makes other decisions free. In those exceptional moments when God calls us to some particular work he has in mind for us, those habits of faithful decision-making will help us to both hear and obey that call.

Laura Smit is a pastor in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who is currently doing doctoral work in philosophical aesthetics at Boston University, Boston, Mass.

Back to God Hour seeks Toronto involvement

Bert Witvoet

TORONTO — For the first time in 10 years the Back to God Hour plans to hold a rally in Toronto. The site chosen will be the same as 10 years ago — St. Paul's Church on Bloor Street. Organizers hope they will fill the auditorium, which holds 3,000 people.

The rally will be held March 8. The main speaker will be Rev. Dave Feddes, who replaced Rev. Joel Nederhood as head of the radio ministry. Feddes will speak on "It's Going to the Doctor."

Around the same date Back to God Hour meetings will be held in Hamilton and Peterborough. But national development director Hans Mulder calls these church services, not rallies.

Mulder hopes that the Toronto rally will attract many young people. "They need to know what the Radio Back to God Hour is doing, and what the effect on local communities is," he says.

The Back to God Hour radio

program is broadcast in nine languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Indonesian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

"There's a lot of excitement around the foreign ministries," says Mulder. In China alone the Back to God Hour is on the airwaves (AM and shortwave) three hours a day, 365 days a year. It is estimated that the program can be heard and understood by 1.2 billion people.

The potential in Russia is 150 million Russian-speaking people.

The future of the Back to God Hour television program "Faith 20" is being discussed by a committee which will report early spring, says Mulder. The program is expensive, as it takes in 25 per cent (over 42 million) of the total Back to God Hour budget.

Mulder hopes that the Toronto area will become more involved in the Radio Back to God Hour outreach ministries.

Bibles are in high demand in Cuba, says Bible commission

HAVANA, Cuba (EP) — "There is something like an explosion in Cuba because everyone wants to have a Bible," says Rev. Jose Lopez of the Bible Commission in Cuba. The Bible Commission, the official channel for all Scriptures sent to Cuba, distributes Bibles to universities, where they are used as textbooks; to bookshops and libraries, which are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture; and to churches, Roman Catholic and other denominations.

In the 1970s, official permission was granted for 2,000 to 3,000 Bibles per year to be brought into Cuba for distribution among the churches. In the 1980s, the Bible Commission requested that the supply be increased to 10-15,000 per year. Now, in the 1990s, Cuba has been receiving more than 100,000 Bibles per year. Last year, they received 156,000 Bibles and 200,000 New Testaments as well as 700,000 Gospels.

In 1991, the United Bible Societies was given permission to print Scriptures in Cuba and began printing Gospel portions

and Scripture leaflets. In 1993, the German Bible Society sent two printing presses which now print many Scriptures in Cuba.

In 1992 and 1994, the Bible Commission distributed the Bible at the International Book Fair, where it was the best selling book, says Lopez. "It's very interesting that people who do not belong to a church buy the Bible. This is because of the very low price made possible because Bibles come to Cuba as a donation from the United Bible Societies."

Former atheist abortionist baptized

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — Dr. Bernard Nathanson, the former abortionist who went on to make the influential pro-life documentary "Silent Scream," was baptized as a Roman Catholic in December. Nathanson, a former Jewish atheist, had been attending a Catholic church for about two years.

Features

The advantages of 'Chills Unlimited'

Vivian M. Loken

Friends in the sub-tropics think I wear a fur-lined hood at the dinner table. They see me locked into a land of iced hopes and frozen dreams. Even admitting to drawbacks, however, life in the Northland is not all hardship.

Those who have never tried living above the Mason-Dixon line don't understand. What they see as our plight has an aspect of liberation. Whatever disadvantages persist, every householder has something Southerners would like to have.

Once, I saw our cold world as a restriction. I had not yet laid claim to the power of giving tribute to its benefits.

Until I became conscious of the story of Paul and Silas in Acts 16. They were put in prison for telling others about Jesus. There, in shackles and chains, they began praying and singing hymns of praise. The earthquake that followed opened all the doors of the prison. The chains that held Paul and Silas came unfastened.

We, locked in a frozen land, can open our eyes to new possibilities in everyday living. Our icy shackles can also fall away. With a little forethought, I capitalize on winter's chill. At this time of year my handicaps are

As a woman of modest means, I am unaccustomed to excess. Too much of anything seems indecent.

undenied. I must go about huddled in a heavy coat. Daily, I take the risk of falling as I run from my car to the store on rivers of ice. I can't do anything about this.

I can, however, turn my attention to advantages. Take the matter of keeping food products fresh. During winter months, my garage becomes an auxiliary to the refrigerator relieving the strain on the capacity of my seven-foot refrigerator.

Sometimes, cashing in



MARIAN VAN TIL

coupons increases that strain. When I find eggs at a discounted price, I buy several dozen. Bags of apples that load refrigerator shelves got there at a ridiculously low price. And, of course, the supply of condiments (like ketchup and mustard) take a stubborn, unrelenting stand for their share of space.

Sometimes, the supplies in our refrigerator overflow. I have known the problem to reach crisis proportions. When that happens, during winter months I can move any surplus items to the built-in cabinets in the garage.

While we of the North are not as deprived as some people believe, we learn to avoid snowy streets and ice-packed roads whenever possible and to anticipate blizzards. This results in having more products on hand than might be considered normal.

'A secret ministry'

How pleased I am that shelves above the woodbox in the garage can help to house the extra stuff. It is not only a solution to the cooling-space problem but, also, I have items at eye level for ease of taking inventory.

Outside, the cold winds grow in velocity. Temperatures tumble at night and stagger upward during mid-day. Coleridge once wrote, "Frost performs its secret ministry."

In this case, the secret ministry maintains temperatures low enough to keep the garage chilled. The secret ministry locks the backyard in its icy

grip. Suddenly, the mousse I planned for dessert after Saturday evening's dinner becomes possible. I can put a cooler on the back porch. The mousse will rest safely there until needed.

Eight salads will remain fresh on a garage shelf. Two dinner courses are in the hands of a frost-bound region.

As a woman of modest means, I am unaccustomed to excess. Too much of anything seems indecent. But overabundance of refrigeration is a luxury whose terms I understand.

My garage-sized icebox cools cakes and pies at no expense at all. The cooker filled with warm bouillon and the large kettle of scalding-hot fruit soup can cool indefinitely in the cement-floored garage.

The abundance of storage space during winter months continues to challenge my mind. There is so much room that I will never exceed its capacity. There is more cubic feet of refrigeration available than I can calculate.

Like Paul and Silas in their prison, I sing praises for a land locked by ice. I am drawn to the sheer magnitude of all the cold space available. To make another comparison, eternity with God is as much as I can grasp. The faith to believe it makes it so, and faith has no limits, either.

I continue to add up assets for Chills Unlimited.

Vivian Loken is a freelance writer who lives in chilly Minneapolis, Minnesota.

A 'winter of discontent'? Never!

Marian Van Til

It's commonly held that those of us who fondly embrace winter are crazy. But we cold-weather zealots figure if you live in a climate that lays winter upon you for a minimum of four months a year, why not embrace it. And we harbor the view that any able-bodied person who retreats to a warmer climate during that time may very well have wimpy tendencies. And someone who lives in such a climate full time undoubtedly isn't at all up to confronting life's vagaries head-on.

I grew up outside of Chicago, where, as far as I was concerned, we had lovely winters (considerably colder and generally fiercer than here in the Niagara region, contrary to common perception). My best childhood memories are of things that happened in winter: falling backward into a cushiony layer of backyard snow to carve out snow angels with arms and legs; laboriously rolling gigantic, mitten-soaking snowballs which evolved into carrot-nosed, neck-scarved snowmen (no snowwomen then); trying to get our dog to pull my beloved wooden-slatted sled with the red metal runners (with me on the sled) down the ice-slicked road next to our house; trying to figure skate on that same icy, but very bumpy, road; feeling a tiny tinge of joy at the frequent sight of a gloriously red cardinal; singing Christmas carols, breath escaping in steamy clouds, to our neighbors; and after a couple of really good storms, trying to build "igloos" with chunks of hardened snow we would cut out of our yard with hatchets.

Contrast is the key

The wonderful thing about winter is the contrasts it allows. After all those activities in the bracing, sometimes much-to-nippy cold, you could always look forward to how the enveloping warmth of your mother's kitchen would feel when you came in; and to the delicious liquid heat that was hot cocoa sliding down your throat.



MARIAN VAN TIL

Having put away some of those "childish" things, winter now includes snow shoveling, refilling bird feeders, hauling the recycling and garbage down to the road, and taking brisk walks on the nearby golf course.

But afterwards: you come in and fall

onto the couch in front of a merrily crackling fire. (A childhood longing for a home with a fireplace was realized when my husband and I bought our current Cape Cod-style house.) And of course, there's still cocoa, though we now more sophisticatedly call it hot chocolate.

Finally, when all that cold and snow — alternating with freezing rain, sleet, a few "warm" days and more cold and snow — starts to get to you (yes, even we winter lovers admit it does happen), one can take great delight in poring over seed and plant catalogues, dipping into one's library of gardening and landscaping advice, and planning for the spring ahead.

My dad, who had farming and gardening bred into him, taught his five children never to complain about the weather. It was God, after all, who created the weather and the seasons. My dad's view was: when you moan about the weather, you're murmuring against God. (That always made me picture those murmuring Israelites who got sick and tired of manna and sick and tired of quail; and you know what happened to them.)

I still think about my dad's words when too much rain and grey, too much snow, too much humidity or too much heat tempt me to mewl about the weather. Then I remind myself that I sure am glad God created the seasons — all four of them.

A Journey to Christian Faith

by
Terry Whitsitt

Two young men dressed in suits and ties were standing at our door. They wanted to talk about the Bible and tell us about the events that led up to the founding of their church in Palmyra, New York, in 1830. They seemed honest and sincere, so my mother invited them in.

They told a story of a boy, younger than my age of 16, named Joseph Smith Jr. He had questions about God and wanted to know which church he should join. He said that while praying in a grove of trees he saw two men appear in a pillar of light. We were then told that these men were God the Father and Jesus Christ. We were further told that God had told Joseph that all churches were an abomination to him, all of their doctrines were false and he should join none of them. Joseph was then told that a book containing "the fullness of the everlasting gospel" was to be given to him. Through Joseph, God would restore to the earth the "true church" which had been lost since the death of the last of Christ's apostles.

Since I had not read the Bible except for a few verses I had been taught in Sunday School as a child, I believed what they told me. The result of their visit in 1962 was that I joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also known as the Mormons.

No Trinity

Not knowing anything about Christian doctrine, I accepted most of the Mormons church's teachings without question, teachings like: "There are many gods"; and "God the Father also had a father who is a god, and he [God's father, also] had a father who is a god"; "God is an exalted man"; and "If we follow all the teachings of the LDS church, some day we can progress to become a god." There were others, however, that were a little difficult for me to believe, like: "God the Father and Jesus Christ had many wives and children." One of the hardest to believe was that Jesus

Christ and Lucifer, who later became the devil, were brothers.

One thing I remember hearing the most from Mormons was that in James 2:17 the Bible tells us that faith without works is dead. But the Mormons added, "We are saved by faith *after everything that we can do*. I soon came to learn that in the Mormon Church the members' faith was not in Christ but in our own works.

During the 10 years I was a Mormon I met many Christians who would ask me questions about what I as a Mormon believed. Some would even quote Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon Church, or Brigham Young, Joseph's successor. Many times Christians would tell me things that the Mormon Church and its founders had taught that I had never heard before.

I didn't believe they were true until I checked out the references on my own and found that Joseph or Brigham did teach

are taught that the Bible is full of errors and that the Book Of Mormon is "the most correct of any book on earth." So when I found that there were almost 4,000 changes in the Book Of Mormon since the first edition in 1830, I was shocked. While reading the book *The Articles of Faith* by LDS apostle Dr James Talmage, I noticed that on page 236 he said: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accepts the Holy Bible as the foremost of her standard works, first among the books which have been proclaimed as her written guide in faith and doctrine." I decided after reading this that the Bible deserved to be read.

Bible has unintended effect

The first thing I read that started me thinking was in Isaiah 44:6, 8: "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the LORD of hosts, I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God... I told thee from that time and have declared it. Ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any." I also read: "For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any one should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

Then I read: "And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace" (Rom. 11:6). God's Word went on to say: "...Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ... for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16).

The Bible was saying that salvation is not through works and obeying laws, but through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I was no theologian, but I could read plain English. I could see that what the Bible was saying was the complete opposite of what I had been taught for years in the Mormon Church! Furthermore I read: "But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

So the gift of salvation was given before we did anything



Terry Whitsitt

those things, like: "Adam is our father and our God..."; "No man or woman...will ever enter the celestial kingdom of God without the consent of Joseph Smith"; Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost...".

In the Mormon Church you



Detail of an oil painting by Ken Riley. Joseph Smith said he received engraved plates from the Angel Moroni. Smith translated them into what came to be called the Book of Mormon.

ourselves, "while we were yet sinners." We don't have to do this ordinance or that work or do "everything that we can do," and then let Jesus Christ take over and finish our salvation. The Bible says, we must look to Jesus "the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2).

Facing hard facts

I had a hard time facing it, but when I looked in the Bible I discovered where I and all other Mormons would stand on Judgment Day. We would present our good works and church service to God, but it would be all worthless, for Christ says, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22,23).

After almost three years of studying and searching the Bible and the teachings of what I had been told was "Christ's only true church on the face of the earth," I had to face the hard fact that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were false prophets and that the LDS church, in turn, was also false. It was a hard

decision to come to. I had to bury my pride and admit that I had made a mistake in joining the LDS church and I had to leave my Mormon friends.

Most important, I put my faith in what God says and not what people say. Since I came to that place in my life 25 years ago, God has given me a great desire to share the truth of the Bible with others who have been led down that broad way "that leads to destruction." (Matt. 7:13).

The majority of the members of the LDS church are honest and sincere people, but the Bible says they are sincerely and dangerously wrong. I thank and praise God that he has rescued me from the "kingdom of cults" and has placed me in "the Kingdom of his dear Son," my Redeemer and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Terry Whitsitt is director of Proclaiming the Message Ministries near Cleveland, Ohio. Their short radio program, "Dialogue of the Cults" is heard on 17 Christian stations in 37 states. The ministry also produces two children's programs. Whitsitt speaks at churches about the established cults such as Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses

Feature

How important is the year

2000?

Jacob Binnema

What is all this hype about the year 2000?

It seems that everybody is fascinated by the turn of a century, but even more by the turn of a millennium. Some Christians put more emphasis on it than others.

calendar runs from the creation of the world, and according to that calendar we are now in the year 5757. Muslims start counting from the flight of Mohammed from Mekka to Medina in the year 622.

In old times the years were

read: "In the time of Herod king of Judea..." (Luke 1:5) and "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar — when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene — during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert." (Luke 3:1).

Lack of accuracy

Dating in our time seems much more accurate. According to ancient calculations, I was born in the 31st year after the reign of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands. That seems quite complicated. Now I can say: I was born in A.D. 1921.

But how accurate is that? How do the Jews arrive at a date of creation? I don't know. How can Christians determine the year in which Christ was born? There is no reason to accept that Jesus was born in December. That idea came up to give Christian content to pagan celebrations around the winter solstice.

Can we determine the year of Christ's birth using the data given in the Bible? It was the time of Caesar Augustus. That gives us some leeway. It narrows down when we consider that Quirinius was governor over Syria from 6 B.C. till 4 B.C.

What about the star the Magi saw? It may have been a conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn so that they appeared to be one bright star. Such a conjunction took place shortly before the Christian era. Jesus could have been born in 5 or 4 B.C. Other calculations place his birth at 6 B.C.

If we want to count the years from Christ's birth, we are slightly off by four or five years. In other words, the year 2000 passed actually already in 1994, '95 or '96. This may give us a more down-to-earth look at the new millennium.

Why start with the birth?

The question can be asked: Why count from the year of Christ's birth? While the resurrection of Christ was celebrated in the church from the beginning, the celebration of Christmas came much later. If the number 2000 has special meaning, why not calculate from the resurrection?

What was actually the great turning point in history? Was it the birth of Christ? No, it wasn't. If we stop at Christmas, we have nothing but some decorations and lights that have to come down. I am happy about that. The world has stolen

moments later when Jesus ascended into heaven. Ten days later, on Pentecost, the Kingdom came in power to the earth, to spread over the whole world.

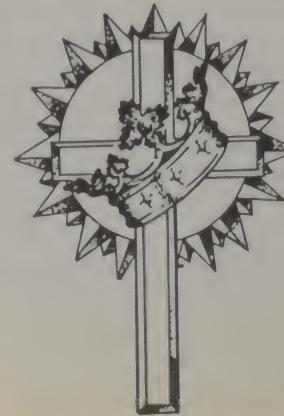
It would be in line with the old custom to count from the day the new king ascended to his throne.

If we use the ascension of Christ as our starting point, the year 2000 is still ahead of us — maybe around the year that we call now A.D. 2030. But why change anything when we cannot be accurate anyway?

It is tempting to speculate: 2000 years from Adam to Abraham, 2000 years from Abraham to Christ, 2000 years from Christ to the day of Judgment.

Some people have identified these three periods as times in which first the Father, then the Son and now the Holy Spirit is active. Matthew 1:1-17 speaks of 14 generations from Abraham to David, 14 from David to the exile, and 14 from the exile to Christ. That is six times seven generations. Three times fourteen.

Calculating from A.D. 1538, the birth of my oldest known forefather Powel till the birth of a possible great-great-grandchild in 2038 could be 16 generations in 500 years. But let us stop speculating.



"What was the great turning point in history? We can think of the moment when Christ said, 'It is finished.'"

Christmas and Santa is trying to steal the glory of Christ. We have something better than Christmas.

The birth of Christ belongs to the Old Covenant. It is written in the part of our Bible that is called the New Testament. But it is still under the old covenant. We can prove that because Jesus had to obey the rules of the old laws. He was circumcised, he was presented in the temple and an offering was brought for him — all under the old covenant law.

The ascent to the throne

What was the great turning point in history? We can think of the moment when Christ said, "It is finished." At that moment the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom. The great sacrifice that was foreshadowed in the many animal sacrifices was now completed.

We can also think of something else: John the Baptizer and Jesus both announced the coming of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is at hand. Jesus said that some were standing around him who would see the coming of the Kingdom.

When the disciples asked (Acts 1:6), "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?", Jesus' immediate answer was given



Jacob Binnema

If Christ doesn't return in our lifetimes, I hope that our descendants will be joyfully greeting the day of Jesus' appearance on the clouds in whatever year that will be. It will be the day of the Lord.

Jacob Binnema Sr. is a retired Christian Reformed minister who lives in Edmonton.



"What about the star the Magi saw? It may have been a conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn so that they appeared to be one bright star."

But even people outside of the church are paying attention. What do we as Christians say about it?

Christians calculate the year 2000 from the birth of Christ as it was calculated and recommended by Dionysius Exiguus in the year 525. The Jewish

counted from the year a king started to rule. In the Old Testament we can read for instance in 2 Kings 3:1 "Joram son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and he reigned 12 years."

In the New Testament we



Voortman

Over 40 Varieties
of
Fine Cookies

Comment

Dear Mary,

While in the Netherlands, the lives of two very old women (over 90) crossed my path. Both had had difficult lives. They grew up in poverty, in families not known for tenderness; their gifts were neglected because they were female. They were both mothers of many children they would raise on tiny incomes. Both were widowed at a young age.

Their minds are still sharp and their bodies do remarkably well, given their age. But this is the troubling part: words of thanksgiving rarely pass their lips. Bitching does: plenty of it. Bad memories oft repeated. Injustices recalled. Two of their sons (cousins of each other and mine) met and asked themselves, visibly grieving: "Where is the faith of our mothers now? Where are the sermons? Where are the prayers? Where is Scripture? Where thanksgiving?"

I also met a man in his late 80s. Since age 51, only a disability pension has enabled him to live in dignity. But then, his wife entered a road towards senility. It didn't take long before care for her had devoured all his savings, including the little house of their happiness. Now he lives in a subsidized senior's apartment where he gets his food, minimum clothing and a modest sum of pocket money. He visits his wife every day, though she doesn't know it. Yet this man is content, full of thanksgiving to God. With his own positive spirit and air of contentment he pulls needy persons into communion with others in this home for the aged.



CC FILE PHOTOS

Why he, and not those women? A mystery perhaps. But then (so the two cousins asked themselves and each other): who will we be when we're 90 (should we live that long)? Like our mothers? But we wish to be like that man. How can we be?

We talked. And then I mentioned to my cousin one of my favorite essays, "The Riddle of the Ordinary," a chapter in Cynthia Ozick's *Art and Ardor*. In brief, she says that the orthodox Jewish way of being in constant praise for the ordinary things in life, for pots and peonies, for chairs and charades, for sex and bowel movements, teaches you to see God as the creator of life in its breadth and depth and height. My cousin nodded, and as he thought about it some more, he nodded even more vigorously.

Gratitude does not come naturally to humankind. In fact, Paul commands us to be in thanksgiving, even in the midst of petitions that well up out of the despair of our lives (e.g., Phil. 4:6). So this is perhaps the key to growing old with praise: get into the habit.

Is that what that old man had done all his life — fill his days with praise? He'd been a Salvation Army volunteer, a gentle personal and musical presence (a band leader) in the lives of those who would often have little to be thankful for in the world's terms. By praising in the midst of brokenness all his life, he'd gotten into the habit. He doesn't even have to think about it, as was clear to me when I talked to him.

If his life is one example of becoming a praising rather than a cantankerous old person, then I want to be in his number! — though it doesn't come naturally to me and I can't bring myself to be a Salvation Army bloke. I should praise God 100 times each day now, even for my arthritic knee, so that I won't know any different. I've already tried it, and I'm still not very good at it. But I'll persist. I don't really want to be crotchety in another 28 years. Not even for a joke.

Adrian

Two
— over —
60



MARY VANDERVELDEN

Dear Adrian,

You raise an interesting issue, one that I've thought about a lot as I've faced my own aging. I suppose all of us have looked at our parents and their generation and wondered what we'll be like when we get to be their age. Do we want to be the way they are? Or different from them? Either way, what do we have to do, besides hope for the best?

One basic truth is that in growing older we tend to become more of what we have always been, whatever that is. More optimistic, interested in people and things beyond our own immediate concerns, or more pessimistic and living within an ever-narrowing circle. So for you and me the die to some extent is already cast. Sobering thought!

But there's more to it than that. There is still, even for us aging ones, a question of choice. Choice of attitude, choice of focus, choice of behavior. I like your example of the orthodox Jew being thankful for (even noticing!) the very ordinary things of life. A wise woman I used to talk with told me to look for the gifts of every day, to wake up in the morning and ask expectantly, "What gifts does God have in store for me today?" And then go on to recognize and be thankful for them: life itself - breath; food; whatever measure of health we have — the list is almost endless. And even when illness or pain or anxieties demand our attention, one question to ask is: "What is the gift for me in this illness or in this situation?" That's a little more manageable, I think, than expecting ourselves always to be thankful or full of praise in everything. The gift may be a small but very real one: release from busyness; more communication with family or friends; more time to reflect; the call to rise to a challenge; whatever.

Perhaps the question of choice goes even deeper than that, though. There is a school of thought within psychology which is very big on our ability to choose. One of their number (I've forgotten exactly which one) says that everybody makes a fundamental choice, and furthermore makes that choice by the age of six months. That choice is whether to live or not to live. Obviously he doesn't mean whether to live or die in a physical sense, but whether to embrace life or simply to conserve life.

I think that's a bit extreme, and it raises all kinds of other questions that we can't get into here. But I often am reminded of it when I see a premature baby fighting for life against all odds, or I see one child in a terribly dysfunctional family who "makes it" out of a morass of abuse and/or neglect, or a person who survives the concentration camp to go on to a productive life. What is that spark that some seem to have while others in similar circumstances are overwhelmed? Do we just chalk that up to God's will or God's grace? I don't think so.

Anyhow, let's keep on looking for God's gifts and practice being thankful out loud. At the very least, we'll feel better and be nicer people to be around!

Mary



Feature

Calvin's antidote

Humanity's arrogance meets the majesty of God

Marvin Olasky

John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was published in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1536. In our modern age, when some Christians go around saying that God is love (that's true) but seem embarrassed

with that ugly but inescapable word politics.

In theology, Calvin's emphasis on God's sovereignty helped to keep the Reformation from falling back into the human-centredness that is natural to us. Today, many Christians slide back and forth between a humanistic sense that we are lords of creation and a fatalistic sense that we are lowly worms.

Far worse and far better

But Calvin shows how our condition is far worse than we tend to admit to ourselves, since we are such sinners, but at the same time far better, since God does not allow our salvation to wither on the vine.

Calvin's writing shows us how to be both completely realistic and completely optimistic. Although Calvin is sometimes portrayed as a theorist only, he emphasized the importance of observation: "We ought not to rack our brains about



Portrait of John Calvin

God; but rather, we should contemplate him in his works."

How, then, should we live? At what should we work?

When it comes to looking at careers and callings, Calvin's contention that God reigns everywhere and human beings can serve God in every area of life — church, civil government, school, agriculture, art, and business — made a vital dif-

ference four centuries ago.

There was no need to be a monk or a nun to get closer to heaven; God could be glorified in normal work and family activities. Calvin's teaching led directly to what has become known as the "Protestant work ethic," because he unleashed individual initiative and encouraged entrepreneurship.

Today, some Christians still think that being a pastor or a missionary is full-time Christian service, but that

those who sit at a business desk or fix a car are far lower in God's economy. Not so: God can be glorified in all activities, even — gasp! — journalism.

Now, to politics: In various writings Calvin showed from Scripture that Christians should obey even unjust laws, except when doing so means disobeying an explicit command of God.

But what happens when local and national governments disagree? In grievous situations resistance to an unlawful state act, if led by "lesser magistrates" such as local leaders, could be a justifiable maintenance of true law.

This concept was discussed and debated for generations. A book written in 1579 by one of Calvin's followers, *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* (Vindication Against Tyrants), proclaimed a right to rebel; it was still being read in the 1760s, according to John Adams, and it helped to convince Christian colonial leaders to plunge ahead.

Earthly power should be limited

New Englanders contended fiercely, as 17th-century minister John Cotton had said, that all power on earth should be limited; 18th-century Calvinist ministers such as Francis Makemie and Samuel Davies carried such doctrines into New York, Virginia and other colonies.

The rebels of 1776, of course, had mixed motives; the British called them an amalgam of "Presbyterians and smugglers." But both factions combined to criticize mainline thinkers such as English jurist Blackstone, who wrote that the power of those in authority was "transcendent and absolute... sovereign and uncontrollable." The colonists' belief in limited government impelled many to act resolutely to limit it.

Arrogance on display

In 1997, Christian lesser magistrates in both U.S. federal and state capitals will have great opportunity to "just say no" to ungodly decrees concerning abortion and other matters. When will a governor and state legislature refuse to enforce federal edicts aimed at unborn children? Will U.S. senators stand up against Supreme Court nominees who will not make a commitment to giving endangered unborn children at least as much protection as endangered animal species?

To learn more about the arrogance of humankind, tune in during the remainder of this century. To learn more about the majesty of God, turn the pages of Calvin's *Institutes*.

Low interest rates worry you? A charitable gift annuity is a great answer!

It provides:

Great Income
Super Tax Savings
A Wonderful Gift

Sample Rates:

Age	Rate for Life	Tax Free
Male 65	7.4%	78%
Female 70	7.9%	78%
Male 75	8.7%	100%
Couple 75	8.0%	82%

Why not introduce your parents, grandparents, aunt or uncle or a friend to the idea? Contact **CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP SERVICES** for information and quotations: no obligation.

Phone: (416) 598-2181 or 1-800-267-8890

Fax: (416) 977-4611

455 Spadina Ave., #210, Toronto, ON M5S 2G8



DYKSTRA BROS. ROOFING (1992) LTD.

Free Estimates

R.R. #1, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0

Marty: (905) 563-7374

Chuck: (905) 646-0199

Fax#: (905) 563-0301



SPRING CHARTERS

Adult from \$499

Senior from \$469

Child from \$429

Car rental 1 week \$147 (BTW incl.)



VALENTINE TRAVEL

(905) 890-5333/Toll Free 1-800-268-6144

London (519) 472-2700/Toll Free 1-800-265-1141

St. Catharines (905) 935-9103

This article was reprinted with permission from the Nov. 1996 issue of *World*. Marvin Olasky is editor of *World*.

**Church
press
quotes**



Rev. Jacob Kuntz

Church response to Aboriginal report

In ChristianWeek (Jan. 7) the release of a \$58-million report by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was called "one of the top 10 news stories of 1996." The report calls for sweeping changes in Canada's relationship with its aboriginal peoples. Responses of several churches to the report have been very positive, even though more time for study is needed. Here are some of the reactions:

From the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada:

"It would be extremely unjust and unwise for the commission's report to be shelved and ignored."

From the moderator of the United Church:

"The question for the government and for all of us is whether we will, in fact, move on some of the things in this report as a nation to put in place a more just society."

From the general secretary of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops:

"The release of the report marks a prophetic moment in Canada's history."

From the indigenous justice co-ordinator of the Anglican Church:

"We're going into an election year. One way to let the report get shelved is to call our MPs and tell them, 'We want to see the royal commission as part of your platform. These are our concerns and we feel they should be met.'"

From the Presbyterian president of the Canadian Council of Churches:

"The release of this report is an important opportunity for Canada. Our hope is this report will help us identify the concrete steps Canadian can take to ensure a more secure and healthy future for aboriginal peoples."

In the January issue of the United Church Observer Muriel Duncan calls the report "a difficult issue for us."

"We call on the federal government to act quickly and decisively on this attempt to

change the course of history for aboriginal peoples in Canada, a watershed opportunity for this country to do the right thing after a history of failure.

"But as a church we come to it with a terrible legacy of our own. The mainline churches ... were instrumental in the long-term abuse — cultural, physical, emotional and too often sexual — of children in our care in residential schools.

"The churches ran the residential schools for the government as it used education to assimilate aboriginal children, taking them from their parents and re-socializing them for the non-aboriginal world. The premise behind re-socializing was violent, 'to kill the Indian in the child.' as reports of the Department of Indian Affairs put it at the time.

"The tragedy didn't end with the school years; it left children 'stranded between cultures,' unable to fit either life.

"With this history, it is almost unseemly for churches to call on the government, our senior partner in this horror, to take its responsibility. Yet we must, for only the government can put the resources into the sweeping changes recommended by the commission and morally required of society. But we can ask in humility, not with righteousness.

"We can confess our part of a national disgrace and work now to make sure we rid ourselves of the racism that allowed it then and continues today. That is harder than it sounds, but it is the only way."

The banks and us

Dr. John Redekop who teaches political science at Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C., is not very happy with the attitude of the major banks in Canada. In ChristianWeek (Jan. 7) he criticizes their financial practices and the high salaries that are paid to senior executives. "Modern money changers have forgotten great favors," he says.

"As it happens, during the 1980s the Canadian government assisted the banks with huge tax breaks to help them out of the gargantuan debt crisis they had created for themselves by making massive loans at higher rates of interest to Third World corporations and governments who were, in the main, incredibly poor credit risks.

"Our Ottawa elites, not wanting to create any doubts about their own burgeoning debts, gladly helped the banks out with public funds collected from ordinary Canadians. After all, when the banks don't pay their share, then the rest of us have to pay more. You and I paid dearly for the unbelievable folly of the Bay Street barons.

"Those same barons, however, seem to have forgotten how much they have benefited from us in those relatively recent years. They now seem not to flinch when they gouge us. Don't misunderstand me. I am not denouncing the free enterprise system, still the best of the available economic options, and I don't think that profit is a dirty word. But I do object to financial practices bordering on extortion. Why, when profits are at record highs, and the cost of money, according to Bank of Canada rates, is at near record lows, must consumer interest rates be as high as 18.9 per cent?

"Further, how can it be conscionable to charge so much,

and then to pay astronomically high salary and compensation packages to senior executives?

"Canadians who believe in fairness need to call banking elites to account.

"When the banks got themselves in deep trouble, the public, through the Canadian government, bailed them out. Now, in the fat years, the banks have forgotten. But they should at least be fair. Since profit margins now are extremely high, is it asking too much to say that returns on shareholder investments should be reduced a little, and the huge bonuses to management should be trimmed somewhat, so that interest rates and service charges could be reduced a little more?"

An awful year

The Catholic Register (Jan. 6) writes about 1996 as an annus horribilis, an awful year for the church, mainly because of government actions and decisions. The paper cites several issues (the school issue in Newfoundland, legislation concerning homosexual couples, cuts in social programs) to demonstrate the diminishing influence of the church on public life. What has made the religious voice in Canada so ineffective?

"We can begin with more than 200 years of Enlightenment thinking which has successfully marginalized the power of arguments based on faith. Those who

work in the media have largely accepted the creeds of rationalism and relativism and make sure religious arguments are treated as quaint anachronisms

in anything they produce for mass production. And our politicians, even Catholic ones, have privatized their faith, preferring misplaced toleration over defending their beliefs.

"The church hasn't done itself any favors. Our sins, especially the highly publicized cases of sexual and physical abuse of women, children and Natives suffered at the hands of clergy, are coming back to haunt us. The small minority has created a big credibility problem for the church.

"The tragedy is that rarely has the world so cried out for the gift Jesus gave to the world. Catholics, like all Christians working toward God's Kingdom on earth, have a precious jewel to offer society in a vision incorporating a sense of community responsibility and justice for all. The question is: How do we get anyone to listen?"

New directions for the RCA

The Reformed Church of America (which also has congregations in Canada) has high ecumenical aspirations.

In the January 1997 issue of The Church Herald we found an article under the heading "Ecumenism. Changing the course of history." We print the first part of that article to show our readers what is at stake here.

"At the 1997 General Synod meeting, delegates will vote on the proposal for establishing full communion with the PCUSA and the UCC; however, these relationships came into being through the RCA's joint membership in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Although full communion does not mean church union, since each partner remains autonomous, it does signal a togetherness in the gospel that goes beyond anything the RCA will have endorsed thus far at the denominational level."

another denomination. Currently the RCA has full communion with the PCUSA and the UCC; however, these relationships came into being through the RCA's joint membership in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Although full communion does not mean church union, since each partner remains autonomous, it does signal a togetherness in the gospel that goes beyond anything the RCA will have endorsed thus far at the denominational level."

Jacob Kuntz is a retired Christian Reformed pastor who lives in Brampton, Ont., where he works half-time as pastor in Holland Chr. Homes.

Classifieds

Classified Rates	Birthdays	Anniversaries	Obituaries	Obituaries
<p>(Revised February 1, 1995)</p> <p>Births \$25.00</p> <p>Marriages & Engagements \$40.00</p> <p>Anniversaries \$45.00</p> <p>2-column anniversaries \$90.00</p> <p>Obituaries \$45.00</p> <p>Notes of thanks \$35.00</p> <p>Birthdays \$40.00</p> <p>All other one-column classified advertisements: \$15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is \$15.00. Letter under file number \$35.00 extra. Photos: \$25.00 additional charge.</p> <p>Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive</p> <p>ATTENTION!</p> <p>a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.</p> <p>b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is not acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.</p> <p>c) Photographs sent by fax are not acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.</p> <p>d) <i>Christian Courier</i> will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.</p> <p>e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS</p> <p>We offer a one-year subscription for only \$25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the <i>Christian Courier</i> and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose \$25.00 and the couple's correct address.</p> <p>Christian Courier 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (905) 682-8311 Fax: (905) 682-8313</p>	 <p><i>Congratulations to Jeanette VanOosterom (nee Knor) on the occasion of her 90th birthday!</i></p>	<p>1947 February 7 1997 <i>As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.</i> The children of MR. and MRS. HENRY and BERNARDA DE JONGE praise the Lord in celebration of their parents' 50th wedding anniversary. Harry & Mary De Jonge — London, Ont. Michael, Mark, Ann & John (Daylan), Melissa Hank & Nell De Jonge — Ancaster, Ont. Sara & Ralph, David, Jessica, Rhoda Jerry & Mary De Jonge — Nanticoke, Ont. Barbara, Robert Bert & Linda Renkema — Lonesboro, Ont. Enc, Brenda, Colleen, Adam Address: 311 Riddell Street, Woodstock, ON N4S 6N8</p>	<p>Hoogeveen Hensall the Neth. Ont. 1942 1997 In loving memory of THE REV. HENRY ANNEN After a gracious, uncomplaining struggle with leukemia, Henry was received into glory on Jan. 17, 1997. "My salvation and my honor depend on God; He is my mighty rock, my refuge" (Ps. 62:7). Loving husband and partner of Anne Kuik. Father of: David & Angela — Hensall Rick & Sue — Stratford Brenda & Darcie — Chatham Jeffrey (deceased) Michael Son of Henry (Annen) DeHaan, Aylmer, and the late John Annen. Brother of: Case & Jane Annen — Aylmer Joanne & Steve Paas — Burlington Al & Marguerite Annen — London Bernie & Becky Annen — Delton, Mich. Home address: Anne Annen, Box 381, Hensall, ON N0M 1X0</p>	<p>Leeuwarden, Fr. Burlington, Ont. June 29, 1946 - Jan. 21, 1997 "I have loved you with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:5). After a lengthy illness, the Lord took to Himself His child, our dear sister, and loving aunt JOPIE SPAN She was the youngest daughter of the late Job and Tina Span (nee Vander Meulen). Dear sister of: Bauke & Tjitske Span — Apeldoorn, the Neth. Freda & Jerry Van Dyk — Cambridge, Ont. Bill & Tina Span — M.V. Anastasis Shirley & Len Van Raamsdonk — Georgetown, Ont. Jane & Frank Roorda — Holland Landing, Ont. Tina & Herman Boks — Hamilton, Ont. Corne & Ted Bootsma — North York, Ont. Jopie will also be sadly missed and fondly remembered by her many nieces and nephews. The funeral service was conducted by pastors Ryk Brown and John Postuma at the Aldershot Presbyterian Church in Burlington, Ont., on Jan. 24, 1997. In the presence of her Lord and Savior, Jopie now savors the peace and rest she yearned for so much in her life. Praise be to God! Correspondence address: Jane Roorda, 14 Tall Pines Trail, Holland Landing, ON L9N 1J5</p>
<p>Births</p> <p>DROST: Bram and Jennifer rejoice in the birth of LEAH JOHANNA on Jan. 13, 1997, weighing 9 lbs., 4 oz.</p> <p>Leah is proudly welcomed by Alan, Philip and Stephanie, as well as by grandparents Peter and Sharon Drost, Tillsonburg, Ont., and Louis and Martha Bill, Jarvis, Ont., great-grandmother Patricia Hogterp, Townsend, Ont., and by aunts, uncles and cousins.</p>	<p>MR. JOHN WESTERHOEK We will celebrate dad's 90th birthday on Feb. 19, 1997, with his wife Connie and children: Jack & Ann Jennie & Peter Nettie & Neil and 10 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. We thank God for his faithfulness and many blessings. Address: Holland Chr. Homes, Hope Tower #214, Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7</p>	<p>For Rent</p> <p>CLINTON, ONTARIO ADULT LIFE LEASE RESIDENCES</p> <p>available, 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info. call (519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.</p>	<p>John & Agnes Slomp — Brooks, Alta. Henry & Willemin Slomp — Picture Butte, Alta. Sister-in-law Gepke Slomp (Koops) of Coaldale, Alta., Joe and Hennette Duen of Brooks, Alta., G.B. Telslage (Duen), Jan and Tine Duen, Mane Duen-Botter and Gernt and Gerda Duen, all in the Netherlands. Funeral service was held on Friday, Jan. 17, 1997, at the Chr. Ref. Church of Brooks, Alta., Rev. Jake Corvers officiating. Correspondence address: John Deunk, #8-8th St. West, Brooks, AB T1R 0B6</p>	<p>Jorwerd, Fr. Stratford, Ont. Dec. 29, 1918 - Jan. 7, 1997 "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest" (Ex. 33:14). Suddenly, the Lord took to be with Him MARTEN TALSMAN in his 79th year. Beloved husband of Agnes (nee Bouma). Dear father of: Michael & Jean Talsma — London Theresa Talsma — Stratford Dear grandfather of: Michelle & Daryl, Marvin & Keri, Darryl, Stephen. Survived by three brothers, all of the Netherlands. Funeral service was held at the Chr. Ref. Church, Stratford, Ont., on Jan. 10, 1997, with Rev. Wm. D. Dirksen officiating. Correspondence address: Agnes Talsma, #306-639 West Gore St., Stratford, ON N5A 7N2</p>
<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>Financing needed to develop rural business. Gladly pay 10 per cent interest. Call Len VanderPloeg at (403) 590-2010 in Calgary, Alta.</p>				<p>Personal</p> <p>ONE TO ANOTHER</p> <p>Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue \$5. Write to: #302, 1502-2nd Ave. S., Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2</p>

Classifieds

Teachers	Job Opportunities	Job Opportunities	Job Opportunities	Job Opportunities
<p>BARRIE, Ont.: Timothy Chr. School invites applications for 1997/98. Anticipating continued growth the following potential openings are being considered:</p> <p>1) Full-time Grade 1 (experience preferred)</p> <p>2) Full-time Grade 2 (French would be an asset)</p> <p>3) Full-time Grade 4 with specialties in French and instrumental music.</p> <p>Please send resumes by March 1, 1997, to:</p> <p>Mrs. Jane Tjeerdsma, Principal Timothy Chr. School 49 Ferris Lane Barrie, ON L4M 2Y1</p>	<p>Wycliffe BIBLE TRANSLATORS</p> <p>TEACHERS NEEDED</p> <p>157 positions to fill for the 1997-98 academic year: elementary & secondary teachers, itinerant teachers, tutors, administrators, librarians & student residence parents (in traditional and in nontraditional settings)</p> <p><i>Children's education is vital to the Bible translation task. Good education programs enable members with children to continue their work.</i></p> <p>Requirements: valid teaching certificate and minimum one year teaching experience</p> <p>Contact: Children's Education & Family Services Wycliffe Bible Translators Box 3068, Station B Calgary, AB T2M 4L6</p> <p>E-mail: wis_canada@wycliffe.org Phone: 1-800-463-1143 Fax: (403) 250-2623</p>	<p>Chemistry/Physics teacher needed</p> <p>Toronto District Christian High School is soliciting applications from chemistry/physics specialists who would like to join a team with a vision for the future of high school education. Please contact me if you have any desire for this job which begins August 1, 1997. Send applications to Ren Siebenga, c/o TDCH, 377 Woodbridge Ave., Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8. E-mail: siebenga@tdch.torcon.com</p>	<p>Miscellaneous</p>	<p>The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents "EEN BEELD VAN 'N MAN" a three-act comedy by J. Hemmink-Kamp</p> <p>Admission: \$8.00 in advance or \$10.00 at the door (Refreshments during intermission)</p> <p>WOODSTOCK: Market Square Theatre March 7 and 8 at 8:00 p.m.</p> <p>LONDON: Dutch Canadian Club Hall March 21 and 22 at 8:00 p.m.</p> <p>Tickets for the above performances from Adrian Rodenburg, R.R. 4, Thamesford, ON N0M 2M0; (519) 283-6285</p> <p>PETERBOROUGH: April 5 at 8:00 p.m. Tickets from Frank Meevis, 25 Emily Manor Drive, Omemee, ON K0L 2N0; (705) 799-6919</p> <p>CLINTON: Town Hall April 12 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets from Sue Guetter, 400 Victoria Street, Clinton, ON N0M 1L0; (519) 482-9257</p> <p><i>(Mail orders up to two weeks prior to performance, must include cheque and self-addressed stamped envelope.)</i></p>
<p>BOWMANVILLE, Ont.: Due to increased enrolment, Knox Chr. School invites applications for two primary teaching positions for the 1997-98 school year. Due to an anticipated maternity leave, we also require a senior kindergarten teacher for the 97-98 school year only. If you would like to become part of a dynamic, growing school of over 300 students in a modern, well-equipped facility within a park-like semi-rural setting, forward your letter of application and resume to the principal:</p> <p>Bill Helmus Knox Chr. School 410 Scugog Street Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K2 Phone: (905) 623-5871 Fax: (905) 623-8877</p>	<p>HOUSTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL</p> <p>Houston Christian School invites applications from elementary and secondary teachers for potential openings in both the elementary and secondary grades. The specific elementary grade or combination grade is not yet decided. Applications from secondary teachers with skills in math, computer studies or French will be very attractive — secondary teachers need to teach several subjects. We expect about 100 students in the elementary grades (K-6) and 70 students in our secondary grades (7-12) for the 1997-98 school year. A building addition and full gym came into use in November 1995. Houston is a forestry-based community of some 4,500 people. Applications will be welcomed by Jack VandenBorn, Principal, at:</p> <p>Houston Christian School, P.O. Box 237, Houston, BC V0J 1Z0, Phone: (250) 845-7736; Fax: (250) 845-7738; e-mail: hcs@netshop.net</p>			
<p>BURNS LAKE, B.C.: Burns Lake Chr. School requires a teacher/principal to commence Sept. 1997. Please send your resume with your statement of faith and philosophy of Chr. education to:</p> <p>Robert Duiker, Principal Burns Lake Chr. School P.O. Box 574, Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0</p>				
<p>Job Opportunities</p>	<p>Communications Coordinator, CRWRC-Canada</p> <p>The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), is currently seeking applicants for the full-time position of Communications Coordinator with Christian Reformed World Relief Committee - Canada (CRWRC - Canada). The qualified individual must be a creative, energetic, self starter with excellent communications skills, both written and oral, with the demonstrated ability to develop and utilize various media, while possessing an understanding and appreciation of ministries and the work of CRWRC. The responsibilities include the development of all communications/educational resources in the Burlington, Ontario office of CRWRC - Canada.</p> <p>University degree or college diploma required, preferably in journalism, public relations or communications, with a minimum of two years experience in business, government, or volunteer agency information bureau a plus. Computer proficiency in PageMaker 6.0 or related desktop publishing software is essential.</p> <p>A detailed job description is available upon request. For consideration, submit a copy of your resume and a letter stating your interest, by February 19, 1997, to:</p> <p>Director of Personnel Christian Reformed Church in North America P.O. Box 5070 STN LCD 1 Burlington, Ont. L7R 3Y8 (905) 336-2920/FAX (905) 336-8344</p>	<p>Bethesda Christian Homes In Woodbridge "Just a little above Toronto"</p> <p>Three storey: Seniors' 1 & 2 bedroom apartments, balcony, ravine, etc.</p> <p>Two storey: Residential Care, Private Rooms - 2pc en suite, homelike.</p> <p>Retire in comfort, security and peaceful surroundings. For rental inquiries and reservations Phone/Fax (905) 459-2111 Andy Mast, 38 Haslemere Ave., Brampton, ON L6W 2X4</p>		

Classifieds

Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous
 <p>Christian Reformed World Relief Committee</p> <p>DEVELOPMENT WORKERS NEEDED</p> <p>Considering a new or different career? CRWRC is seeking individuals with a career interest in serving in community development overseas. Our two-year Service and Training program currently has a number of openings for persons interested in living and working in a developing country. Essential qualifications are strong interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity, a related college or university degree, or equivalent work experience. For some locations, fluency in French is an asset. Contact:</p> <p>Wayne deJong or Jacob Kramer 800-730-3490 or 905-336-2920 to submit your application before March 1, 1997</p>	<p>Financial Assistance</p> <p>Those persons from congregations in Classis Niagara who are planning to or are presently studying for full-time ministry in the CRC as a pastor and/or evangelist and who are in need of financial assistance for the 1997-1998 academic year are invited to contact the secretary of the Student Fund Committee — Louie VanderBerg, 1662 Second Ave., R.R. #3, St. Catharines, ON L2R 6P9, Fax (905) 641-4624. Application form deadline is March 31, 1997.</p>	<p>Financial Assistance</p> <p>Students from Classis Eastern Canada who are planning to prepare for full-time ministry in the CRC and who are in need of financial help for the 1997-1998 school year, are kindly invited to contact the Student Fund Committee, c/o Mr. James Kooistra, R.R. 1, Williamsburg, ON K0C 2H0, Canada. Please apply before July 1, 1997.</p>	<p>The King's Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • easy to join • fully registered • prevailing interest rates • new contributions, transfers, spousal plans, RRIF's <p>• <i>Over \$4 million in RRSP contributions are invested in a second mortgage on the new campus. Supporter-based financing is the key to managing our debt!</i></p>	<p>RRSP</p>  <p>For more information or forms, contact Mr. John Rhebergen.</p> <p>THE KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE 9125 - 50 St., Edmonton, AB T6B 2H3 (403) 465-3500; FAX (403) 465-3534 E-mail: jrheberg@kingsU.ab.ca Web: www.kingsU.ab.ca/~jhr/vpadmin.htm</p>
 <p>DCA Travel Toronto 416-224-5211 Toll-Free (Canada wide) 1-800-667-2525 Fax 416-224-0842 Grimsby 905-945-3301 Burlington 905-522-8602 Emergency Service Available Business & Vacation Travel</p>	<p>WOMEN!</p> <p>The Canadian Classis Quinte of the Christian Reformed Church was presented with a study paper re biblical texts which appear to express a bias against the female gender and to have contributed to the marginalization of women in our denomination. Classis discussed the paper and sent it back for further study. A response was also written to the report of the synodical committee to study inclusive language for God. Synod needs the balance provided by this response and missing in the committee's report. Persons interested in these issues should write to Rev. Dirk Habermehl, 16 Pebble Beach Drive, Cobourg, ON K9A 2C5, Canada, enclosing \$1.00 per copy for expenses.</p>	<p>Teachers</p> <p>Langley Christian Schools</p> <p>Enrolment increases and the addition of Grade 11 means positions will be available for the 1997-98 school year. Applicants need to send a resume, statement of educational philosophy, and teaching evaluation reports. Eligibility for a BC Teaching Certificate is required.</p> <p>Elementary Campus (K-5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Primary & Intermediate Openings * Music (80%) and French (20%) Teacher <p>(Qualifications in Phys Ed and/or Special Ed would be added asset at Intermediate level.)</p> <p>Middle School (6-8)</p> <p>Possible Opening for Teacher at Grade 7/8 (Qualifications in French an asset.)</p> <p>High School Campus</p> <p>(3 or 4 Teaching Positions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Computer Science Teacher * French * Career and Personal Planning <p>(Applicants also need to be able to teach one or two of the following: Bible, Drama, Math, Business, English, Socials or Science.)</p> <p>Send applications to the Principals:</p> <p>Leo Smit (Elementary) 21789-50th Avenue Langley, BC V3A 3T2 Phone: (604) 533-2222 Fax: (604) 533-7276</p> <p>or</p> <p>Peter Van Huizen (Middle/High) 22702-48 Avenue Langley, BC V2Z 2T6 Phone: (604) 533-0842 Fax: (604) 533-0842</p>	<p>King's Terrace</p> <p><i>A Creative Adult Christian Community</i></p> <p>Purchase options: Why pay rent? Prepay full amount or finance up to 50% or more and carry like rent. Invest the difference. You retain ownership and equity. Ask us how!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Custom designed for comfort and easy living. * Spacious 1 and 2 bedroom plus den suites. * Conveniently located near Steeles Avenue West and McLaughlin Road in Brampton. * Your investment grows as property values increase. * Sponsored by King's Knoll Terrace Non-Profit Homes. <p>Act now to reserve the suite of your choice.</p> <p>For more information: Pauline Schuringa at (905) 457-6715 201 County Court Blvd., Suite 500, Brampton, ON L6W 4L2</p>	<p>SEEKING A PASTOR</p> <p>Horizon Community Church, a new CRC ministry of 100 families, is seeking a pastor. The church is located in the thriving suburban community of Highlands Ranch, a part of the Denver Metropolitan area. Key to the church's program is Bible-based dynamic preaching, enthusiastic worship, and sharing of the gospel in active outreach to a suburban community. Essential to the church's development is continued facilitation of the merging of two congregations and leadership for staff ministry. Please send inquiries and/or resumes to the Search Committee, Horizon Community Church, 7140 S. Colorado Blvd., Littleton, CO 80122.</p>
<p>ADA REALTY LTD. 2011-137 Ave., Suite 404 Edmonton, AB T5A 4W2 (403) 473-8149 Sid Vandermeulen</p> <p>Contact us first when you think of moving to Edmonton and district.</p> <p><i>Het vertrouwde adres.</i></p>				

Classifieds

Events	Events	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	Vacations				
<p>- FAMILY - BACK TO GOD HOUR RALLY</p> <p>St. Paul's Church 227 Bloor Street East (at Jarvis), Toronto</p> <p>Saturday, March 8, 1997 at 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>SPEAKER: Rev. Dave Feddes of the Back to God Hour Radio Minstry & C.R.C.T.V.</p> <p>TOPIC: "It's Going To The Doctor"</p> <p></p> <p>SPECIAL MUSIC The Choirs & Brass of the Ontario Christian Music Assembly of Toronto & Bowmanville and The Kooy Sisters Under the direction of: LEENDERT KOOL, A.R.C.T. ANDRE KNEVEL at the Organ</p> <p>Easy to Reach by Subway MANY CHURCHES ARE PLANNING BUS SERVICE LOOK FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>Come Sing Along In A Wonderful Night Of Christian Fellowship FREE ADMISSION AMPLE FREE PARKING COLLECTION</p>	<p>REDEEMER COLLEGE R.R.S.P.'s</p> <p>The time is right for</p> <p>✓ RRSP deposit limit is \$13,500 for 1996. With the 1996 deadline of Feb. 28, 1997 fast-approaching, make your 1996 contribution soon.</p> <p>✓ A Redeemer College RRSP earns a very competitive interest rate, compounded semi-annually.*</p> <p>✓ For information, call toll free:</p> <p>1-800-263-6467.</p> <p><small>*Determined in January & July of each year in relation to the Consumer Price Index</small></p> <p>777 Hwy. 53 E., ANCASTER, ON, L9K 1J4 (905) 648-2131</p>	<p>Rates to March 31, 1997</p> <table> <tr> <td>RRSP</td> <td>Regular Fund</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Appr. 4.3%</td> <td>4.0%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Your funds will be invested in Christian Reformed Church and Christian school building projects in Canada.</p> <p></p> <p>Call: (416) 461-1207 evenings or write: Christian Reformed Extension Fund 45 Harriet St., Toronto, ON M4L 2G1</p>	RRSP	Regular Fund	Appr. 4.3%	4.0%	<p>GOING TO HOLLAND FOR VACATION? Why not rent a VACATION APARTMENT and visit family and sight-see at your leisure. CENTRALLY LOCATED near APELDOORN. Year-round accommodations. FOR BROCHURE OR MORE INFORMATION CALL Harold or Nellie at (905) 985-7891 or fax us at (905) 985-3007</p>	<p>For Sale</p> <p>Landscaping business for sale on central Vancouver Island. Year-round work for 2-3 people with room for growth. Terms and transition negotiable. Call 1-250-746-4063</p>
RRSP	Regular Fund							
Appr. 4.3%	4.0%							
			<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>Send your questions to Peter and Marja</p> <p>Confidentiality is assured.</p>	<p>Interested in placing an ad? Get in touch with us for details.</p>				
<p>Are you striving to integrate your Christian faith in your teaching? Do you want to be a leader in your school's improvement? Are you looking for an exciting master's program that fits your busy life? The Dordt College M.Ed. program is designed with you in mind. Our goal is to help Christian school teachers make their classrooms and schools more distinctively Christian. Our summer program will allow you to earn your degree in just three summers, or as many as six, while spending minimal time away from home. You'll share your insights and struggles with fellow Christian teachers and take away ideas that you can use in your classroom. Dordt also offers mini-courses for continuing education and graduate credit.</p>	<p>Preparing leaders in Christian education</p> <p></p> <p>DORDT COLLEGE</p> <p>"Dordt's master of education program is helping me unite my Christian perspective with my classroom teaching." Jon Kroeze</p>	<p>Sioux Center, Iowa 51250 • 1-800-343-6738</p>	<p>Evangelistic Materials in Arabic Also, in English, <i>The Bible and Islam</i> \$5.95 Canada/\$4.95 U.S. and a folder of essays on Understanding the Middle East (\$1.50). Write: The Back to God Hour P.O. Box 5070 Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8</p>	<p>Calendar of Events will return next week!</p>				

News

Strong response to counselling mission brings financial squeeze

People possess solutions for problems they face, says counsellor

Bert Witvoet

ARTHUR, Ont. — Clientele at four New Life Counselling locations in Wellington County is growing, but it does put financial pressure on the Christian agency and places time and energy demands on its lone counsellor, Lois Raats.

Mark Okkema, chair of the New Life board, calls it a paradoxical development. "We've worked so hard for so long to attain our current level of service, and now it's actually draining us financially to the point of threatening our very existence," he says.

After providing services for 11 years, the agency has expanded beyond its main office in Arthur (25 kilometers northwest of Guelph) to donated spaces in a hospital in Palmerston, a United Church in Drayton and a medical centre in Grand Valley. Lois Raats works one day in each facility.

An urgency to help

New Life is a non-profit agency which believes in helping



New Life counsellor Lois Raats (left) with Mark Okkema, president of the board.

people even if those people can't financially afford the help. Fortunately, many area churches, including Christian Reformed and Reformed congregations, keep the mission going with donations and volunteer services.

The cases that Raats deals with range from marriage problems to problems with children, low self-esteem, despair, job problems and abuse.

Raats, whose husband is a United Church pastor in Dray-

ton, believes that God wants people to develop their potential to be whole. She uses her gifts to help people realize that potential.

One key principle she works with is that people possess solutions, or have them within reach, for whatever problems they face. "I am very solution oriented," she says.

Raats talks about two separate but related things which people need: support and change. "They need empathy and under-

standing first," she says. "But after listening to them, you help them find ways to do things differently."

Brief interactions

Raats does not believe in long-term counselling unless it involves serious cases like childhood trauma and abuse. The focus is on empowerment. "People can always come back if things don't work out later."

She related how a husband who had separated from his wife came to Raats because his oldest daughter was defiant and difficult whenever she and her siblings came to visit him for the weekend. Raats spent a session with the daughter, affirming her in her right to feel grief and frustration. She then asked father and daughter to come and share their concerns.

She created a space for them to relate in non-oppositional ways, she says. After four weeks, things had turned around completely. A "praise the Lord" phone call from the father confirmed that no further sessions were needed.

Raats thinks of herself as an optimistic person who is good at using her imagination to reframe situations for her clients. She credits God with that, who, she says, "is endlessly creative."

Education coalition wants misconception cleared

Will continue to fight against Ontario's education injustice

Marian Van Til, with files from OMCEC

AGINCOURT, Ont. — The Ontario Multi-faith Coalition for Equity in Education wants to clear up a misconception it believes the public has about last year's November Supreme Court decision regarding funding and healthcare for students at Ontario's "religious schools."

When the Supreme Court ruled against the Elgersma-Adler case it was not saying that Ontarians can expect no help from the courts or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, says the coalition. The Court did not rule that "public" monies cannot be used for "private" purposes.

What it did make clear, says coalition spokesperson Gerald Vandezande, is that the Ontario government "is constitutionally permitted to fund Christian, Jewish and other independent schools." Vandezande calls that "a major step forward in our ongoing struggle for freedom of religion, free choice and fiscal equity in Ontario education."

New case may have a chance

The multi-faith coalition points out that the Ontario Court of Appeal will hear the Bal case this spring. That case involves "the availability and constitutionality of optional religious programs and alternative Christian and other explicitly religious schools within Ontario's two publicly funded systems," says the coalition.

On May 5-6 in the Bal case, coalition lawyer Peter Jarvis will challenge the Ontario Ministry of Education's "Policy Memorandum No. 112," which the coalition says "arbitrarily prohibits school boards from providing or allowing optional religious schools or programs within the public system."

Because of the ruling in Elgersma-Adler, the Bal case may have a better chance, the coalition thinks,

since the Supreme Court has said there's no constitutional prohibition against the Ontario government funding such programs and schools. "The only limitation is that the government must ensure that the offering of such optional religious programs and alternative religious schools is done on the basis of equality and in a non-coercive manner," says Vandezande.

Thinkbit

*To those who are sentimentally inclined:
"One of the problems of real life is that it provides no background music."*

News Digest

Prayer changes things

CALGARY — Auto executive David Zimmerman wants 100,000 people to commit to praying for Calgary, reports the Canadian Press. Zimmerman believes enlisting such "prayer warriors" on his city's behalf will make it a better place to live, and that such prayer "will hold back crime and violence." Zimmerman is a member of Crossroads Community Church in northeast Calgary. He has established Calgary Prayer International to organize the three-year-long prayer blitz.

No weddings here

ORLANDO, Fla. (EP) — Weddings are not Mickey Mouse operations; that's why the Roman Catholic Church has banned its priests from performing ceremonies at Disneyworld. The Diocese of Orlando has told its priest not to perform ceremonies at the Magic Kingdom, and has written to other Catholic leaders across the U.S. advising them that visiting priests will not be granted permission to perform marriage ceremonies on Disney property.

Diocesan chancellor Sister Lucy Vazquez explained, "Marriage is a sacrament, and we believe that all sacraments ... must be celebrated in a church setting." Some 1,700 couples will be married at Disneyworld this year.

Web of speculation

EDMOND, Wash. (EP) — If you're willing to speculate that Bill Gates, multibillionaire head of Microsoft, is the Antichrist, there's a Web site for you. Fundamentalist preacher-author Jack Van Impe notes that a ghostwriter for Gates has come out in favor of "a permanent, wearable recording device which would be turned on at all times and store every conversation one has" — the sort of technology you would expect the Antichrist to support.

The Web page, called "Proof Bill Gates is the Antichrist" goes into elaborate detail, assigning computer-code ASCII values to each letter of the software visionary's name, adding the "three" for William Gates III, and claiming to arrive at a grand total of — you guessed it — 666.